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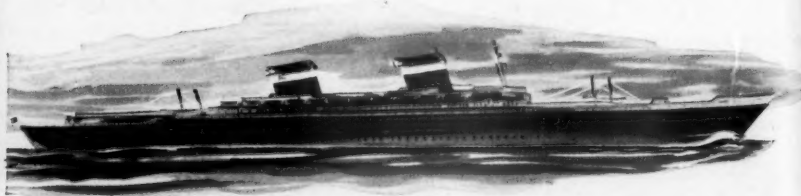
food and wine is an inspired quintessence of the best from England, the Continent and America. There is plenty to do, with swimming, dancing, games, cinema showings, a gymnasium, a fine library. And wise businessmen make their trip to the U.S.A. on these ships both because of the full office facilities aboard (Dictaphone and typewriting services, ship-to-shore telephones) and because they have a chance to meet American businessmen.

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# PUNCH

Vol. CCXXXVIII No. 6227  
January 27 1960



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\*For overseas rates see page 178

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## The London Charivari

APARTHEID is a bad business, and it is essential that people everywhere should be free to express their abhorrence of the system. But the proposed boycott of South African goods is surely unwise and unrealistic. It would hurt South African labour: it wouldn't hurt people in this country who would merely switch to other sources of supply. It would be equally, and therefore unfairly, damaging to the South African supporters and opponents of Apartheid. And it would create a somewhat ludicrous precedent. If we refuse to buy from South Africa should we not, in all fairness, refuse to buy from Russia (still Communist), Spain (still Franco), Germany (swastikas), Egypt (Nasser), America (Little Rock and Ku Klux Klan) and perhaps from Britain (Notting Hill, swastikas, and what you will).

### Heave!

TRAVELLERS on London's Underground have been given posters explaining why they sometimes have to



be ordered out of their trains by the staff. Rush-hour passengers are now asking for further information—why it is that they always have to be pushed into them.

### A Time for Dumb Blondes

NEWS that five hundred Hollywood writers have stopped work on an issue of fees suggests a state of affairs hitherto unknown: for the first time since scripts began absolutely nobody is dictating the words "This calls for a



celebration," "I can explain everything," "There must be some mistake," "The rest you know," "Nice place you've got here," "Why, you—you—!" "Where am I?", "You dirty, double-crossing . . .!", "Men are all alike," "It's been a long time," or "Mmm! Smells good!"

### Holus Bolus

IF the proposed restrictions on the sale of pep pills and tranquillizers (which make life seem exciting or just tolerable, depending how you want it) materialize, it will be a blow to the pockets of pill-manufacturers. But there are many other pills they might turn their attention to: we need pills to make motorists believe they are doing seventy when they're only doing forty; pills to satisfy the craving for money; pills that will make the taste of postmen unattractive to dogs; pills that will make dustmen sensitive to noise; and





Hollowood

"But it's all so pointless, mother. Why can't you walk to an American nuclear bomb base or a horse abattoir or something?"

above all pills to satisfy the craving for pills.

### Keep the Idiom

REPORTERS interviewing foremen who inadvertently start strikes by their verbal indiscretions ought, in my opinion, to take refresher courses in dialogue-writing. "What — time do you think you can come in here?" The foreman who used this racy phrase to a late arrival was made to tell a reporter that "for some time the management had been concerned" about late booking-on and that when the tardy tool-setter said he had been allowed out till midnight "he failed to clarify this explanation." It's not a consistent character-study, any more than it would be to represent a leader of Episcopalian thought as saying "While it must remain incontrovertibly true that the Thirty-nine Articles enshrine the fundamental tenets of our faith, a case may justifiably be argued in this day and age for souping the whole thing up a bit."

### The Glamour Service

NEWS that a flying officer of the Women's Royal Air Force was nominated princess of a German carnival may foreshadow a new type of entry in *Who's Who*. For example: Thimble, Elsie Doris, Air Commandant, Women's Royal Air Force; D.B.E., 1968; b. Bangalore, April 1, 1939; commissioned, 1958; S.O. 3rd T.A.F., 1959; Miss Krupp, 1960; Adjutant and May Queen, Nether Wallop, 1960-61; *Daily*

*Mirror* Woman of the Year, 1961; Public Relations, School of Hovercraft, 1961-62; seconded to *Vogue*, 1963; C.O. Noggin Hill, 1963-65; played Peter Pan, Drury Lane, 1966; Air Staff, 1967-70; runner-up, Most Glamorous Grandmother, Yarmouth, 1973. Publications: *A Daughter of the Service, Smile Please*, etc. Hobbies: publicity.

### None that Got Away

IT is comforting to read that the latest deep-sea fishing device (it finds fish by radar, lures them closer with light, bemuses them with electric shocks and sucks them up a tube) is not yet ready to go into mass-production. The thing can apparently land twelve tons of fish in eight minutes, and is bound to modify the fishing industry considerably. What, for instance, will become of the salt-grizzled beards of our smack-captains? They will have to be shaved off before they get into the electronics and bemuse the crew. And what about the fish? We may be only using, at the moment, one hundred-thousandth of the resources of the sea, but this device is selective; 2.4 volts will bemuse a herring, a mere one volt does for a cod, and at a ton-and-a-half a minute it won't take long to de-herring the North Sea. No, somehow I can't imagine English breakfast tables resounding to cries of "Yum-yum! Kippered plankton!"



"But won't all your 1,200,000 chaps be on their demob leave round about the same time as us?"

The ninth in the series of drawings in colour by Hewison, "As They Might have Been," will appear next week. The subject is:

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS

### No Justice

IN Port of Spain, Trinidad, the Assize Court is only sitting for a three-hour stretch during the mornings at present, so that jurors may be free in the afternoons to watch the M.C.C. matches. And of course this adds a little extra venom to the punishment of prisoners, since it will be all the longer before they can.

### Strange New World

DID you know a spaceman's diet will be something politely referred to as dried pond scum? And had you heard of the hazards of living on a space station? It seems that every cough or sneeze could throw it off course. Worse still, the thing might come to a standstill if everyone went for a brisk walk in the same direction. The whole business sounds unsavoury and unsociable. But I don't know that we're much better off where we are. According to Dr. Margerison (addressing the Royal Institute of British Architects the other evening) an American has claimed that something curious is happening to our own planet because so many people drive on the right-hand side of the road. This, it is said, affects the length of each day.

### Now Read On

IT's hard to withhold admiration from the doctor-journalist who the other day began a newspaper article: "What medical discoveries will emerge in the next decade? The answer, of course, is that no one knows"—and still went on with another twelve hundred words.

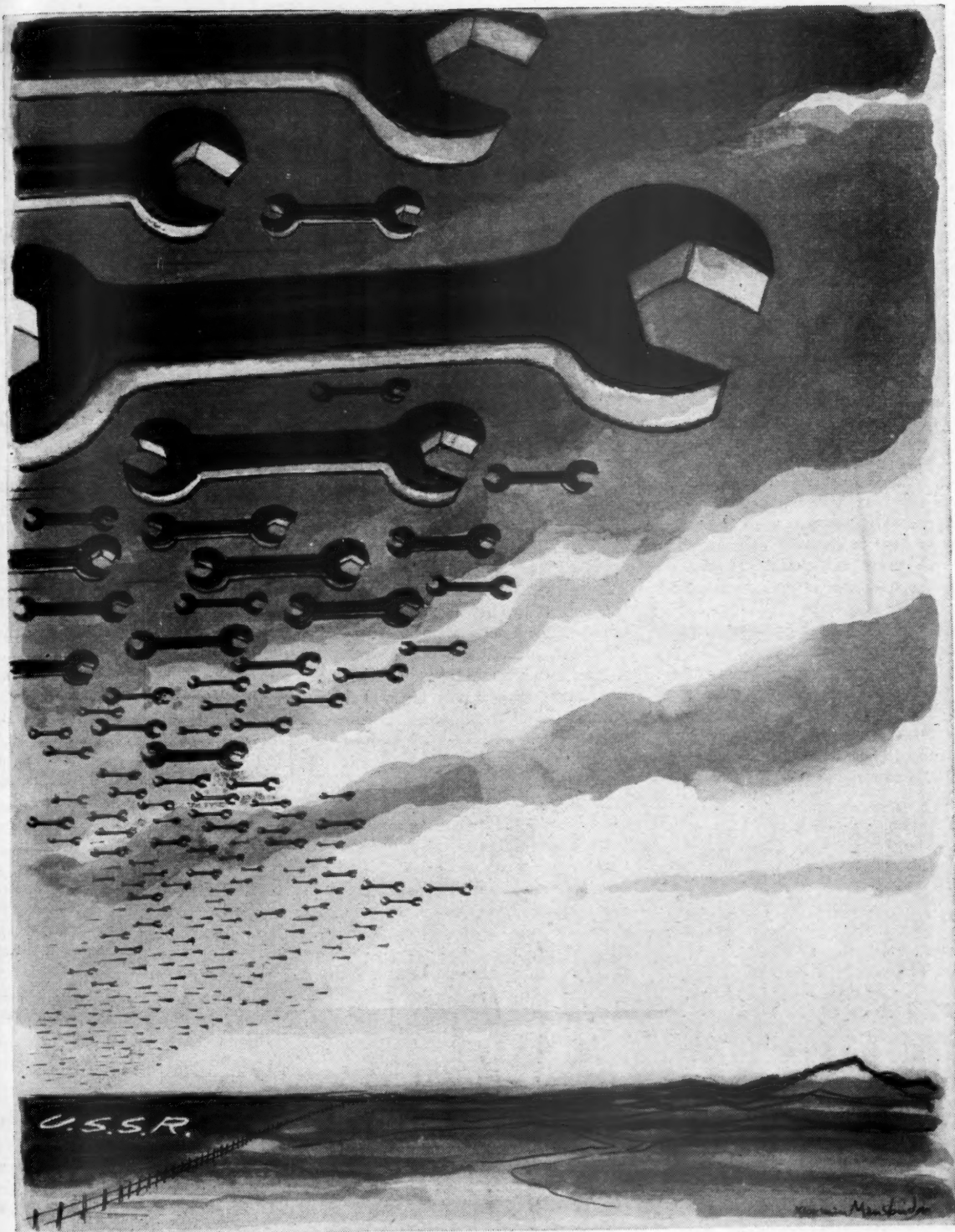
### Whistle in the Dark

Maoris will be officially excluded from the New Zealand rugby union football team this year.

THIS is too much. The racial outlook's grim,  
If All Blacks now are all to be All White,  
And hopes for tolerance grow sadly dim  
As even sport puts out another light.

—MR. PUNCH





"FANTASTIC NEW WEAPON"

## Stand up for Sincerity

# Little Brief Authority



## The Ugly Duchess of Design - By Sir Gordon Russell

**S**HORTLY after the end of the war a friend of mine was not alone in thinking that a little refurbishing was called for. The only hope of getting any painting done was to do it himself. So he went to the local ironmongers to buy a brush and paint. Having got inferior examples of both he asked for a pint of turpentine substitute. No, said the girl without interest, none in stock. When would it be in? Couldn't say. A week or a month? Didn't know. Was anyone else likely to have it in stock? No suggestions. Discouraged, he made for the door and as he reached it the girl shouted: "I suppose *real* turpentine wouldn't do?" This story

epitomizes for me the attitude of the average retailer towards good modern design. In most furnishings he will offer imitation antique, imitation modern, imitation Paris exhibition of the 'twenties, or jazz modern of the 'thirties, but robust, sincere work of our own day, that's a bit much and only to be called in—if indeed he could recognize it—when every other possibility of making a sale has failed.

Nor is this the point of view of the average retail buyer only. I say average advisedly for there are, of course, notable exceptions. Boards of directors of famous companies who pride themselves in being up to date will furnish their houses and indeed their board rooms with banal, machine-made imitations of Chippendale and write to their customers on note-headings which give no vaguest hint that they realize that printing is one of the trades which, at its best, reaches a high standard in England.

Why should there be such a deep-seated belief here in the necessity for, and the virtue of, ugliness? Perhaps it is due to a Puritan distrust of beauty in any form which led to a masochistic faith in the positive value in character-forming of anything unpleasant: "Of course it's nasty, dear, but it will do you good!" When it is a case of building a house the situation as a rule would be intensely funny if it were not so tragic. Frequently anything really good or really bad is subject to a Nazi-like quizzing by people who have little knowledge of, and no interest in, any developments of the past fifty years.

The run of the mill, whatever it may be, goes through without comment.

Having stood up to this inquisition by those who know what they like, the man who feels that his own day has something to contribute may then approach a Building Society so as to translate his architect's drawings into bricks and mortar. What does he find? Sane modern architecture is considered a fantastic risk. Only cranks would ever dream of building or buying it. No. Stick on some imitation half-timber work, fix lead comes over the large windows designed to let in the sun and light, put crazy paving in wiggly paths to the front door, and rustic brickwork in a wave-topped wall in the street, paint the guttering red and behave generally as if you were twelve, that's fine—you can now borrow the maximum! You're obviously a responsible person.

But if you are not this sort of person but are hale, intelligent and persistent enough to find an architect whose ideas are in tune with his own times, commission him to design a house for you, tell him accurately what your needs are and let him get on with the designing of it; if you then manage to convince the Planning Committee that common-sense architecture will not ruin the local amenities and persuade the Building Society to lend you some money to get on with it, then you are likely to find the local builder will say to himself: "Cripes, this is a job out of the ordinary—must have money to burn!" (By the way, if you manage to brief the architect accurately it proves that you are a



"I'm not just lying here—I'm boycotting."

remarkable person, for most clients seem to have the strongest urge to have a doorway like one they saw at Rye or a staircase from the Triennale: they design half the house themselves and blame the architect for their failures.) But anyway, you stick to your guns, only to find that any pleasant materials or fittings are said to be in short supply and dreadful alternatives are offered, with the full assurance that they are what everyone likes! By then you feel in need of a holiday because you still have to tackle the problem of furnishing, and, even at a remote distance, that seems a job of work.

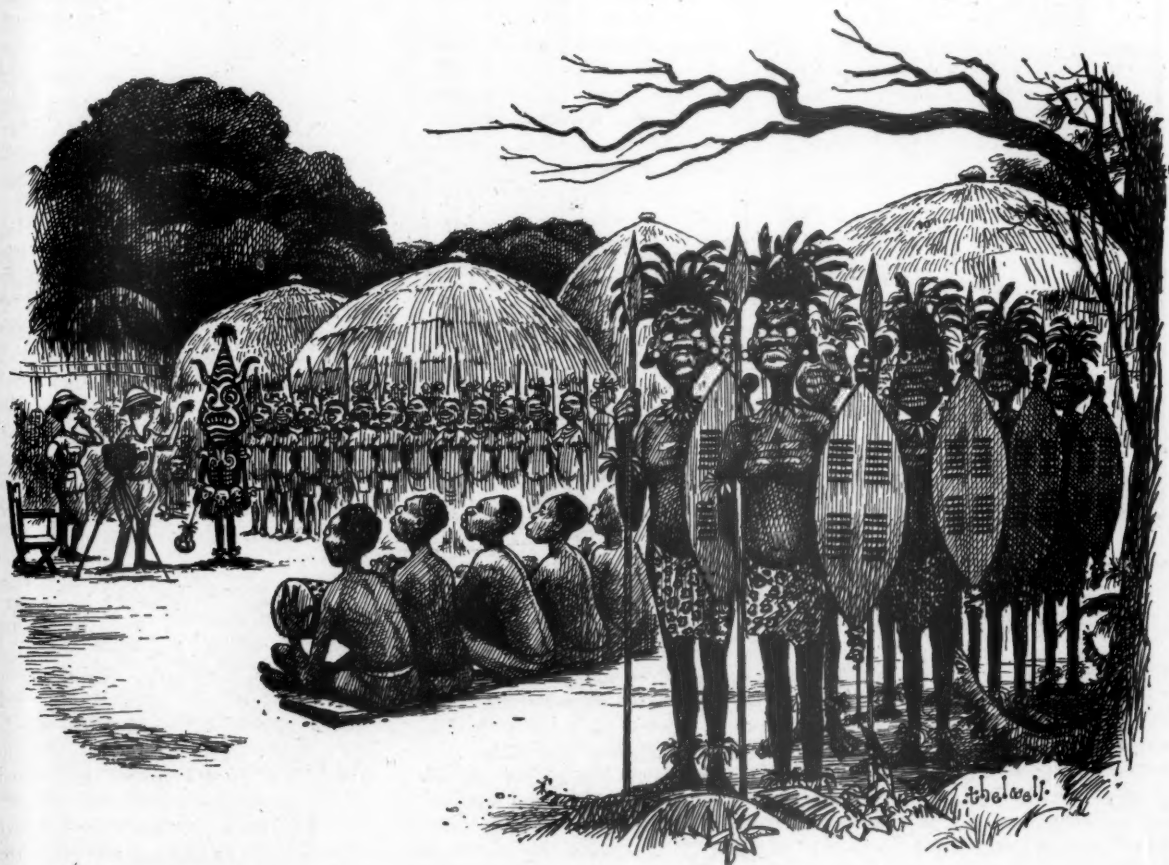
On your return you find perhaps that little seems to have happened since you went away, which may be fortunate! (Of course, all builders take a holiday too in fine building weather.) So you begin a few preliminary skirmishes on the furnishing front by visiting shops.

Broadly they fall into three groups. Those who have never heard of the modern movement, a group strongly reinforced by most of the Hire Purchase chains; those who are convinced that the style they are pleased to call "contemporary" has had its day so that they can get back comfortably where they started; and those who, with the bland assurance of ignorance, tell you that "contemporary is the furniture of the future," and then proceed to show you nightmare imitations of well-designed things.

But let me assure you it is worth while keeping your chin up for the last lap. There are shops—and they are gradually increasing in number—which are run by people who are both sincere and have taste. And they are greatly encouraged when people like you take the trouble to find them. For they do see the importance of thinking of a

room as a whole, an attitude which I have found almost impossible to get across to dons or indeed to educationists generally. Of course, I suppose it is a pretty revolutionary idea anyway that the background of schools and colleges is a part of education, so they carry on, as Alice would have said, to educate and diseducate, at one and the same time. It is all rather puzzling.

I can't help feeling that the essence of successful education, living, politics or even trading is to take risks, carefully calculated risks, but risks none the less. So much trading in Britain has been made too easy over the last twenty years. It needs spicing with danger so that firms can weigh the risks more objectively. Perhaps then some Boards might begin to wonder whether the public is as adolescent as they think—indeed whether it may not grow up before they do. Then it might be seen



"Who is it to-day—ITV or BBC?"



that well-planned estates of good sensible architecture furnished with well-designed things were likely to be far better commercial risks in a few years' time. If one takes notice of the signs that many people are not finding the role of Peter Pan a satisfying one surely it is reasonable to assume that they will one day look at by-pass architecture with open eyes and then no longer accept the house agent's valuation.

Even crusted retailers from the frozen North are beginning to sense a change of atmosphere, a change which they feel might have unpredictable but

certainly alarming consequences. It is as if a tortoise, suddenly awakened from his winter sleep, found himself in the middle of a forest fire. Showing a party of retailers round the Design Centre recently I heard one dear old gentleman, who, man and boy, had had the public's every need taped for more than sixty years, say to his companion with dismay: "Why, if this goes on much longer I shall be forced to *stock* some of this stuff!" There's the hard core of resistance—the non-co-operator par excellence! And the Co-operator can hardly be called a pace-setter!

Yet it is not easy to assess to what extent the resistance is caused by positive beliefs. There is in it, no doubt, a strong element of pride, the pride of the philistine: "No nonsense about us. We're practical, hard-headed business men. Nothing of the artist in our make-up—you can leave that to the Italians and the French. They're emotional chaps—we're in business to make money, and where there's muck there's brass." Well, you've not got to drive very far to see what a mess the hard-headed and harder hearted man has made of England—the muck often remains long after the money has gone. There is too the deeply-rooted belief in the virtue of being uncomfortable oneself and of ensuring that everyone else is uncomfortable too. One sometimes comes across the feeling among working-class people that they want no guidance from the middle-class. But I think it is rare, and will become rarer as the middle-class is so rapidly recruiting. I find the recruits often less inhibited than the middle class and sometimes quite touchingly willing to listen to anyone they believe to be both knowledgeable and sincere. And they are pretty good judges of these qualities.

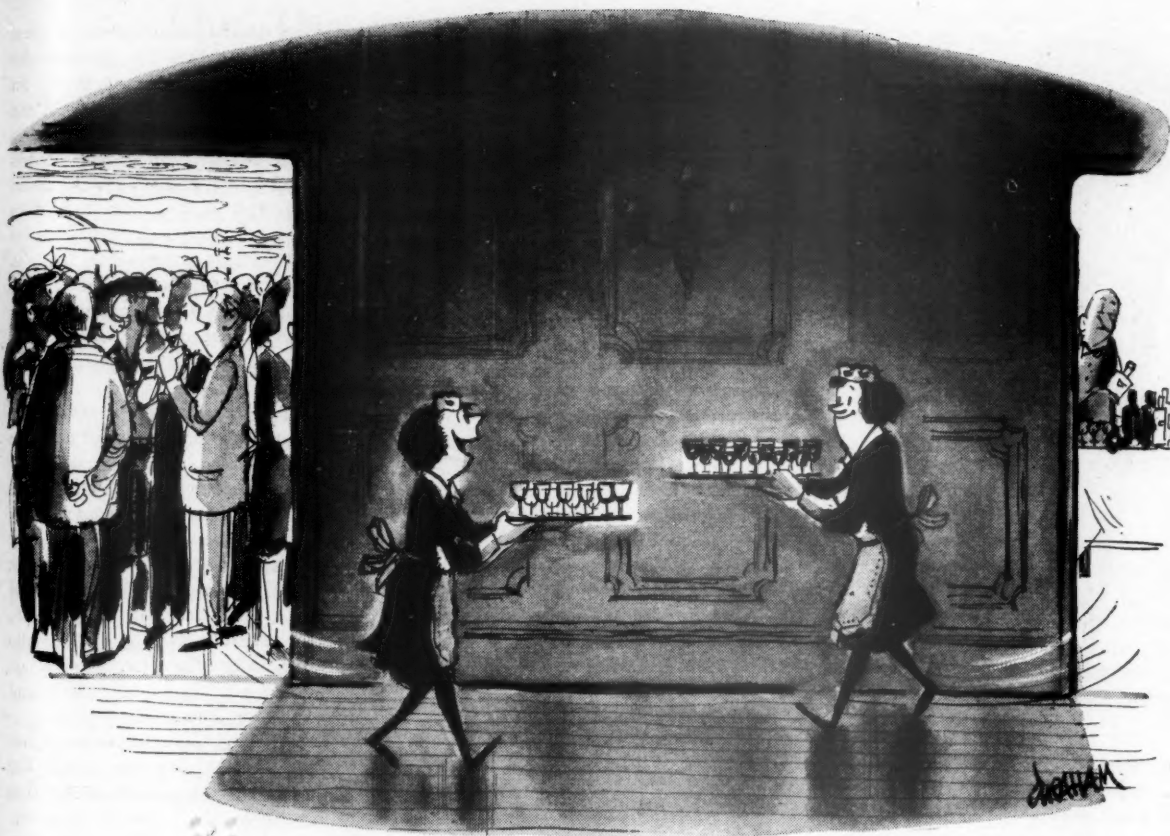
Then there is the belief that the artist, whatever form he may take, is a lewd fellow who panders to the ingrained wickedness of mankind. But when all is said and done the attitude is largely a negative one—a dislike of change, a desire for an easy life, a distaste for the unconventional, a wish to avoid thinking at all costs. Such wayward habits often become instinctive in people who have had practically no visual education at school—which applies to all of us—and have accepted ugliness as their normal background all their lives. Habits aren't easily changed. Just after the war my wife, in an exceptionally optimistic frame of mind, went into the local Employment Exchange. There was only one other woman there, to whom the clerk was speaking. Turning to my wife he said sternly "Do you mind joining the queue?" But she said "I don't see any queue!" "Then," was his triumphant retort, "you must form one!"

☆

#### Accolade

"This week I actually wanted to write about Princess Alexandra . . ."  
Ann Scott-James in the Daily Express





"Mrs. Fitzherbert's tiddly."

## Hi-Way Code

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

*This supplement to the Ministry of Transport's guide to road-users has been made necessary by the controversy now raging in pubs and Parliament*

### BEFORE MOVING OFF

**L**OOK into the driving mirror to see that no one is about to overtake you. At the same time examine your face closely for blotches, eye-ball straining and other signs of excessive alcohol consumption. If you suspect that you have exceeded your quota (the maximum dose will probably be three whiskies or two pints of beer—*either, or*, remember) you should abstain from driving.\* Switch on the side-lights, leave the car, and return from whence you came in search of help, etc.

Where there is a pavement or adequate footpath, use it.

Watch out for pedestrians and give them plenty of room, especially on left-hand bends.

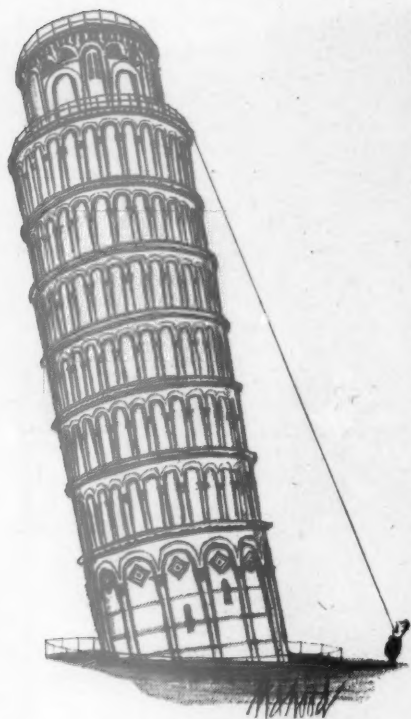
Do not switch from lane to lane.

### ON THE ROAD

If you cannot remember how many drinks you have consumed the chances are that your memory is at fault and you should proceed as at (\*) above. It may be, however, that there is some reasonable doubt in your mind.

To test your driving efficiency turn into a side street and back out promptly when it becomes apparent that you are in a ploughed field.

Select a good dry stretch of road (if the road is wet dry it with your cap or the loose covers) and accelerate to twenty miles per hour. Now drop a glove through the near-side window and brake sharply. Your over-all stopping distance, according to the Code, should not be in excess of forty feet—made up of twenty feet of "thinking distance" and twenty feet of "braking distance".



distance." Get out of the car and walk back to your glove. If the distance is more than thirteen ordinary strides you should admit to mild intoxication—at least. But give yourself a mark or two for recovering the glove.

If the result is indecisive, drive on until you approach a pedestrian crossing, a road junction, a corner or bend, the brow of a hill, or a hump-back bridge. If there is any temptation to overtake, resist it, slide the car on to the grass verge (except on M1), throw away your keys and fall asleep.

#### OFF THE ROAD

You will be awakened by a policeman. He will invite you, summarily, to breathe into a balloon which, being inflated, will be labelled and subsequently used in evidence against you. Your condition being what it is you will of course have provided against this emergency by transferring the pump from the tool-box in the boot to the dashboard recess, and you will try to distract the officer's attention while you attach the nozzle to the neck of the balloon and work the handle. But such behaviour is not recommended since it inevitably adds the words "intractable and unco-operative" to the charge-sheet.

It is perfectly reasonable, however, to feign unfamiliarity with balloons and to ask the officer to start the thing off for you. And if he is not enough to fall for this one you will be in the clear: it takes a good lawyer to isolate one component in a mixed bag of breath, and police officers are not supposed to drink on duty.

About breathing. It is just possible—experiments abroad have proved it—to inflate a balloon without calling on the foggy lower levels of the lungs. With practice fresh or freshish air can be inhaled nasally and exhaled through the mouth in such a way as to short-circuit the tell-tale areas of alcoholic infection. But the trick is not easy. It is above all noisy. It tends to arouse suspicion and may provoke the officer into taking a blood sample.

You will be conducted to the police station and confronted by the surgeon-on-duty. You will feel a prick (if you don't you should certainly dissemble), followed at an interval by the cry of "£50 with costs, licence endorsed" or worse.

#### IN THE PUBS

This is where the trouble starts. Barmen are there to sell drinks, but they are helpful birds and will cheerfully tell you, when asked, that you have had enough—three whiskies or two pints. Provided, of course, that they are in a condition to remember. Frankly, though, it is up to you to count

your own drinks. Many motorists find that a few pebbles in the overcoat pocket are useful for this purpose. As in umpiring at cricket, you hold the pebbles in the hand and allow one unit at a time to slip through the fingers. Most pubs have convenient gravel drives, and it is but the work of a moment when alighting from your car to select stones suitable for the job. The supreme merit of this accounting procedure is that it is undemonstrative, unobtrusive: there is only the sporadic clink of pebble against pebble to betray your anxiety.

Some motorists have less confidence in themselves. They prefer to deposit an appropriate sum of money with the barman and instruct him that this represents maximum disbursement. The difficulty lies in the fact that the original outlay has to be large enough to provide for possible meetings and treatings, with the result that the drinker, having placed his stake, is apt to avoid companionship. The flesh is weak.

#### ON THE WAGON

This is strongly recommended. When approaching a tavern accelerate and overtake if necessary. Cautiously, but not *too* cautiously. Just keep going. And worry duly but not unduly about signals, road junctions, cattle, cyclists, pedestrians or anything. Worry slows you down, and slowing down, in these circumstances, can be fatal.

## The Haunted Bungalow

YOU strangers, come to settle, little know  
Upon what ground presumes your bungalow;  
Given no warning, asking no advice.  
Those are memorial trees you sacrifice;  
Nothing to you their carved initials mean;  
Nothing the drama that the copse has seen—  
Red Indian ambushes, gun-battles, when  
Children were Cowboys who are now old men.  
Shall you not hear strange noises in the night—  
Crackle of camp-fires, bangs as phantoms fight?  
And while you're bathing, or behind your chair  
Wood-pigeons' mourning when no bird is there?  
Indignant ghosts of squirrels—may they not  
Scold your intruding offspring in its cot?  
A spectral blackbird's loud alarm-cry—that  
May wreck the nerves of your complacent cat.  
You have to reckon with the dispossessed,  
You who dare build where others look to nest!

— W. K. HOLMES



# The Deterrent War

By H. F. ELLIS

**W**OULD anybody who happens to be as muddled as I am care to accompany me on a brief investigation into the present state of the theory of deterrents?

Originally, the thing was simple. America had the atom bomb, and the possibility of its use in retaliation was reckoned to be enough to deter all those millions of Russians from flooding across Western Europe. Good.

Then Russia acquired atom bombs, and the certainty of their use in retaliation for the employment by America of atom bombs to stop a conventional attack by Russia made the deterrent an uncomfortably double-edged weapon. Not so good.

Both sides now produced hydrogen bombs, of such power that it became unlikely that either side would risk using them,\* unless of course Russia supposed that a surprise attack might render her opponents incapable of retaliation. This uncomfortable proviso robbed the hydrogen bomb of much of its initial charm, for a deterrent which may be destroyed before it can be used ceases to deter.

The perfecting of rockets for the delivery of deterrents increased the complexity of the situation, by cutting down the available warning time, and led to the policy of the mobile or hidden deterrent. Rockets began to go underground or, better, to move about in submarines under ice-caps and in other inaccessible places. It is clearly useless, or at any rate no safeguard, to destroy an enemy country by surprise when its retaliatory power is elsewhere, perhaps at the bottom of the North Sea. The deterrent, in its mobile role, seemed to be on the upgrade again.

Admittedly, there are certain difficulties in the exercise of overwhelming retaliatory power from the sea-bed. A good deal of responsibility rests with the submarine commander, who may find himself after the first two minutes or so without coherent orders from home,

if any. In particular, it will be a problem for him in his watery lair to know when to stop, unless indeed one is to contemplate the possibility that he will have his Government with him. It is conceivable, I suppose, in these split-second days, that both the American President and Mr. Khrushchev might find it expedient to deter each other from submarines—in which case any meetings arranged between them would be not so much at the Summit as in the Abyss. But it must always be remembered, when discussing the arrangements for nuclear war, that the whole purpose is to ensure that the weapons do *not* go off. It is therefore only necessary for each side to convince the other of the *possibility* of instant retaliation: not to prove that an affair which is designed not to start would go off smoothly if it did. We are perhaps

out of order in raising such academic problems as the transmission of orders to *stop*.

In any case, this discussion is not yet up to date. Mr. Khrushchev's secret weapon has again confused a situation that for a moment threatened to become clear. We know little about this weapon as yet, beyond the fact that it is either "fantastic" or "incredible," according to which translator you follow. This makes it all the more difficult to deter. If, for instance, it is some kind of contrivance for making the oceans boiling hot at the press of a button, it is probably useless for America to continue to build missile-carrying submarines. She must get her rockets into satellites, or at least announce that she has a plan to put rockets into satellites, at the earliest possible moment.

It is true that Mr. Khrushchev's new weapon is not yet ready. It is still, in his own words, "in the portfolios of the scientists and designers." But here again we have to remind ourselves that in deterrent warfare, an anti-deterrent need not be available to be effective.



\*History will record that at this time the old atom bomb lost its deterrent rating and assumed the status of a conventional infantry side-arm. But that is by the way.



*"Fair's fair. If you pass the alcohol test we'll buy you a drink."*

What is not to be used need not, at any given moment, be there. I am sorry to labour so elementary a point, but it is one about which it is possible to become confused. Progress towards a new weapon must be balanced on the other side by progress towards a new deterrent that will be capable of deterring, or the whole balance of power is altered.

Whither then, for the foreseeable future?

As each new step forward is made in the development of ever more fantastic (or incredible) weapons, greater care must be taken to ensure that they cannot, in theory, be destroyed before they have a chance (again in theory) to

retaliate. The search for safe bases becomes of paramount importance. In the absence of an agreement (which would call for much hard bargaining) whereby each side uses the territory of the other as a base for its deterrents, I do not think that the earth, or its waters, will much longer afford any really reliable and secure shooting-off points. The search inevitably must move outwards, into space: to sputniks, to the moon, to the planets. And therein, in my more optimistic moments, I see a gleam of hope.

When Russia deters America from Mars, and America deters Russia from Venus, it seems clear to me that the

incredibly fantastic weapons each will then possess (either on site or in portfolios) will be trained not towards points on earth but against each other. In nuclear, or post-nuclear, warfare it is of cardinal importance to knock out the enemy's main armament first. So there these terrible contraptions will sit, deterring each other like mad in a state of hair-trigger readiness. And suddenly, down here on poor old nerve-ridden Earth, it will occur to all the nations that it doesn't much matter whether the deterrents go off or not. We might find ourselves a couple of planets short and get into a rather eccentric orbit, but who will care about that? We shall be able to settle back into our old free-and-easy predeterrent ways, even to the extent, if we feel like it, of indulging in an old-fashioned conventional war.

☆

"How to proceed about the task of tracing one's own descendants is not generally understood, and the principles will be explained during the talk."—*Hawick Express*  
Crystal balls provided?

## The Overspill

THE herds are cropping on the hill  
Beside the neolithic mound,  
And in the vale the Overspill  
Sprawls, redly tiled and telly-crowned.

The fields our toiling fathers tilled  
Are sown with dahlias and chrysanthus;  
Something, it seems, has overspilled  
And trickled half the way to Hants.

Once it was dark Satanic mills  
That Blake wrote hotly to condemn;  
Now there are only Overspills,  
And no one could speak ill of them.

For here is neither smoke nor filth,  
Clatter of loom nor siren's wail;  
Nothing but civic overspilh  
Spread neatly out across the vale.

The herds still crop upon the hill,  
And neolithic ghosts at night  
Gaze down upon the Overspill  
With awe, and, possibly, delight.

— R. P. LISTER

# How they Brought the Good News

*E. S. TURNER examines the records for royal births of the past*

WHEN news ceased to be spread by word of mouth, by gunfire and by bonfire, half the juice ran out of life. Consider how our forbears handled the auspicious intelligence of a royal birth. The excitement began, at the Palace gates, with the "spontaneous ebullition of a free and generous sympathy" by loyal subjects. Thereafter the news licked through London in a matter of minutes and began to course along the country's arteries, setting off cannon and carillons, fireworks and oratory, creating happiness in gaols and inciting sailors to perform audacities on their yard-arms.

As the big houses heard the news the occupants prepared to drive up to London to sign the Sovereign's book. In the garrisons hoary lieutenants said "This time, surely, there will be a brevet."

It was at 10.48 a.m. on Tuesday, November 9, 1841, that the "Young Stranger" destined to become Edward VII arrived at Buckingham Palace. While the first bumpers were being drunk in the clubs of St. James's the nobility and the Diplomatic Corps (not omitting the Buenos Airean Minister, the Neapolitan Minister, the Hanoverian Minister and the Sardinian Chargé d'Affaires) hastened to the Palace in quest of cake and caudle. The Home Office fussed about preparing letters for a special messenger who left the city at midday by special train on the first leg of a journey to Ireland. This train also carried the special editions of the newspapers. When it reached Birmingham, after three hours twenty minutes, a firm of newsagents in that city sent a horse express to Shrewsbury in order that the news could be carried to Wales. The arrival of a Prince had already "caused great mirth among the Cambrians residing in London," and it seemed right that their mirth should be shared by Cambrians residing in Wales.

The Home Office seems not to have cared about informing the Principality. Its messenger continued by train to

Liverpool where he handed a letter to the Lord Mayor and demanded a steamer to take him to Dublin. Meanwhile the news was being shouted along the railways and stage routes. Bristol knew early in the afternoon. The *Defiance* coach rolled into Colchester with the news in the evening; and about the same time the station-master of Warrington left his post, went up into the town and exhorted the populace to peal the bells without waiting for the ringers. That was about as far as the news travelled on Tuesday.

All this time the nation's public and

private cannon had been taking up the theme first announced by the Tower and Park guns. In Buckinghamshire the artillery troop attached to the county's hussars fired a salute on the command of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, who then ordered free beer for the poor of all his villages. The guns were there, doubtless, for the intimidation of Chartists. At Blenheim the Duke of Marlborough ordered a royal salute; apparently on his own armament; so also, in due time, did the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle. Long after that, but no less fervently.





the Duke of Argyll touched off from Inveraray Castle a cannonade "which was finely responded to by the surrounding hills." Among his cannon was a brass 18-pounder recovered from the Tobermory galleon.

On this brave day in 1841 Liverpool was spared the embarrassment which had followed the birth of the Princess Royal the previous year. The princess had arrived early on a Saturday morning, but the Sunday papers which reached Liverpool said nothing of such an event and, indeed, forecast it for a month later. Then arrived the second edition of Saturday's *Times*, published an hour after the reported event. How could Saturday's press be ahead of Sunday's? There were persons so "ludicrously wise," according to *The Times*, that they disbelieved what they read in the Top People's paper; others took a chance and ran up the flags.

The *Morning Post* was in the habit of announcing royal births under the heading "Fashionable World" and the *Morning Herald* under "Haut Ton," thus making it clear that the Court

was the property of the Establishment. The news, however, overflowed into other departments. In 1841 the issue of the *Morning Post* which announced the royal birth also carried a column-length anonymous ode in honour of the occasion. According to the sub-title it was but "A Fragment." In the same issue was another poem, under the cautionary heading "An Advertisement." Its loyal sentiments were in no way impaired by the fact that the initial letters of each line, read downwards, spelled out Rowland's Macassar Oil. The last three lines ran:

*O-hear, in mercy hear our heartfelt prayer,*

*I-n pity bless the object of our care;*

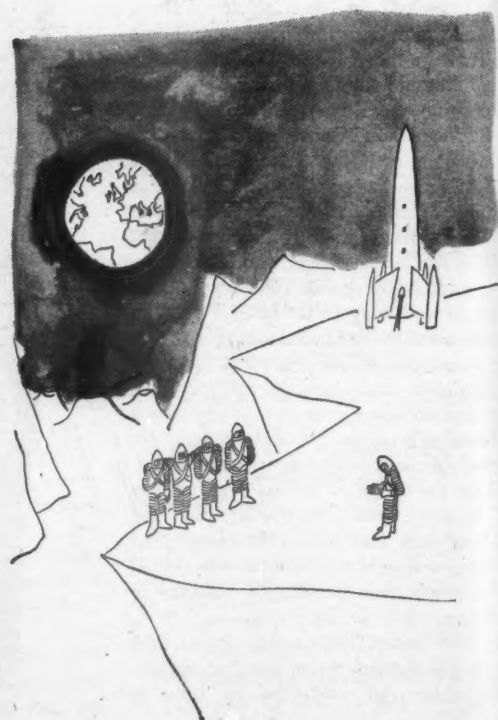
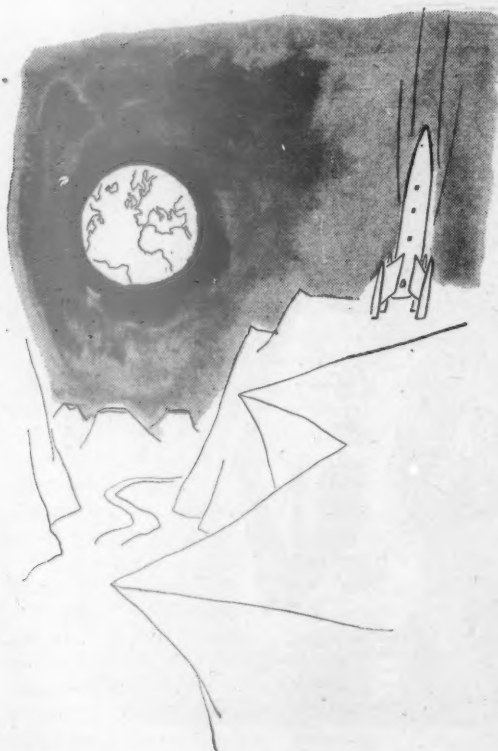
*L-ong live the Prince—long live the Royal Pair!*

For a fortnight or so after every birth the public could read the names of the *Haut Ton* who called daily at the Palace, and, with luck, details of how the fortunate wet nurse came to be selected or the size of the fees paid to the royal doctors. (Dr. Charles Locock was said to have received one thousand guineas

for standing by while the midwife performed her duties at the birth of the Princess Royal.

The public could also read of the dastardly efforts of Chartists to introduce a sour note into civic addresses of welcome. At Bristol, in 1840, their efforts were drowned by "a universal shout of execration," but on Clydeside, according to the *Glasgow Herald*, "the Chartist rage became horrid and the groaning so sonorous that it would have been difficult to hear the discharge of a musket three feet off." Nevertheless the *Herald* reporter contrived to hear such interjections as "Foul play!" "Bow wow," "Sit doon, ye auld ass," "Oh murder, d'ye hear that?" and "Hub-bub-boo."

The officers of the Army and Navy could not be cured of the idea that a royal birth would, or should, bring all-round promotion. At heart they doubtless agreed with *The Times*, which said "Is it not ludicrous and contemptible beyond endurance to make the adoption or rejection [of a brevet] turn upon such a heterogeneous and



far-fetched accident as the birth of a prince or princess?" In fact no brevet was awarded to mark the birth of the Princess Royal; the veterans of Waterloo chewed over, in mystified silence, an explanation that this was a mark of respect to the Princess. On the birth of the Prince of Wales, however, a generous brevet was ordered; so generous that it touched off a demand for a similar scheme in the Civil Service.

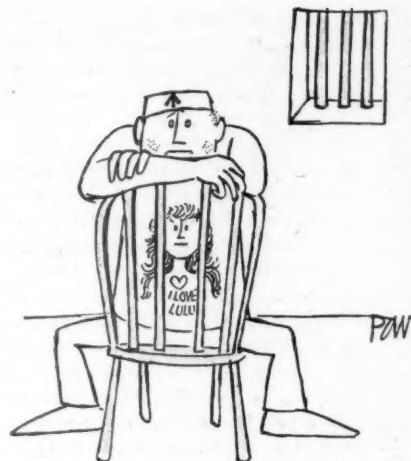
In accordance with tradition the officer commanding the guard at St. James's Palace when the babe was born was promoted to the rank of major. The guard had changed three minutes before the birth took place and the decision as to whether the majority should go to the commander of the new guard or of the old was referred to the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Hill decided in favour of the old guard.

Various gentlemen who had been clever enough to become lord mayors in time for this event earned baronetcies, caring little that *The Times* had vilified the Whigs for squandering this honour on "Irish distillers, joint-stock

ironmasters, Edinburgh law-agents, Jew bill brokers and Highland graziers."

The arrival of Victoria's fourth child, Prince Alfred, in 1844 may be said to have ushered in the Age of Speed. The birth occurred at Windsor at 7.50 a.m. and *The Times* had its special edition on the streets less than an hour later. It said "We are indebted to the extraordinary power of the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph for the rapid communication of this important announcement."

In days of tangled suburban communications the details of how the Ministers were summoned to Windsor make salutary reading, replete with the sort of excitement that attended the London-to-Paris Air Race in 1959. At 6.2 a.m., when the birth was clearly imminent, a messenger on "one of the fleetest horses in the royal stables" rode hell-for-leather for the Slough station of the Great Western Railway and reached it within eight minutes. The stationmaster was turned out of bed and ordered to pass an urgent telegraph message to Paddington. This was to the effect that the various official letters

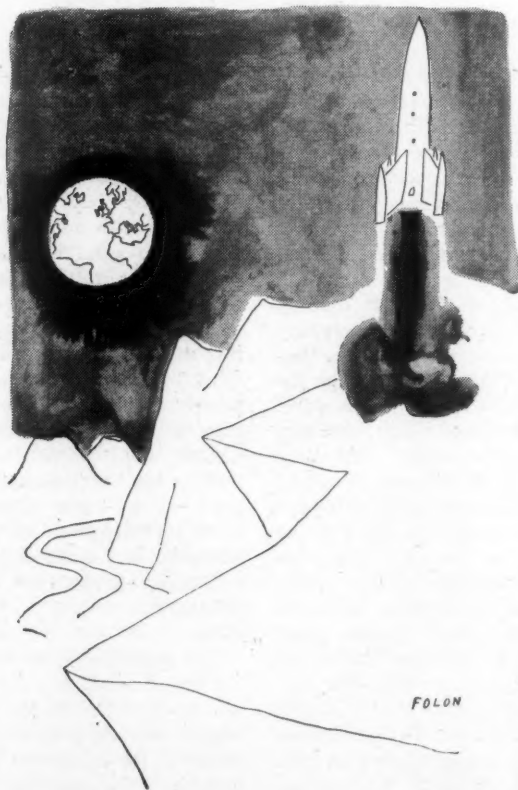


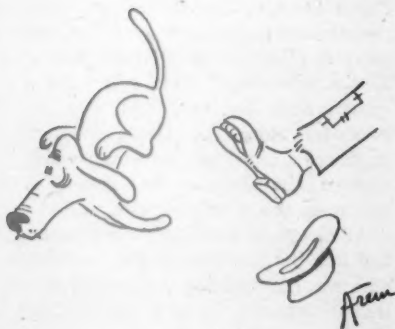
which had been lodged there some days earlier should be sent at once to the residences of the gentlemen to whom they were addressed. Acknowledgment that the knockers-up were on their way through the streets of London was received at Slough within eleven minutes of the messenger riding out of the Castle.

Not all the Cabinet Ministers and Great Officers of State responded with uniform alacrity; indeed *Punch* indulged in some ribaldry over the domestic delays which occurred. The great men's faces were saved, however, by the superb service offered them at Paddington. The first party of four, consisting of the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Privy Seal, the Home Secretary and the Lord Chamberlain, called for a special train which covered the eighteen and a quarter miles to Slough in eighteen minutes. The next arrivals at Paddington were Sir Robert Peel (Prime Minister) and the Colonial Secretary, who ordered a special train for two. This was delayed a little en route by the exigencies of the service.

Then the Duke of Wellington's carriage rolled into Paddington. If *Punch* is right, his reaction on being roused from sleep was to say "Yes, yes, there is plenty of time; these matters always take time." He called for a special train for one, and from its bountiful store the Great Western produced him an express which covered the distance to Slough in seventeen and a half minutes.

At Slough all the Castle conveyances had left, but the Commander-in-Chief, who was now treating the journey as a military exercise, hired a hack fly and





was at the Castle within less than half an hour of leaving Paddington. There he joined the others and in due course viewed the baby, afterwards partaking of an "elegant *déjeuner*." Returning together, the party were rocketed to Paddington in fifteen minutes ten seconds, an average of more than seventy miles an hour. (To-day's time-table gives the running time between Paddington and Slough as anything from twenty-four to fifty-two minutes).

The Earl of Wharnccliffe (who had tarried to shave) and the Earl of Liverpool travelled ignobly to Slough by the ordinary nine o'clock train. A more reprehensible performance was that of the Bishop of London, who caught the mail train at 10.15 a.m. and arrived at Slough to be told that the baby had been born three hours previously. Not daring,

or caring, to show his face at the Castle, he took the next train back to Paddington.

On all sides it was agreed that the Master of the Household had made excellent and intelligent use of the resources of science in order to whisk these great lords to a royal cradle-side with such promptitude and dispatch. Yet this dazzling feat heralded the beginning of the end. All too soon the pervasive Electro-Magnetic Telegraph was scattering auspicious and inauspicious news with equal celerity throughout the land, and thousands of loyal citizens were robbed of the excitement and self-importance of spreading it by word of mouth. The dukes with their private cannon must have been the first to regret the march of communications.

## America Day by Day

P. G. WODEHOUSE reports from New York

I WAS speaking in my last communiqué of Mr. Raymond B. Umbaugh and his plan for doing away with income tax, and I think I made it clear that most redblooded Americans are all for it and wish him the best of luck. There is, however, one section of the community that takes only an academic interest in the Umbaugh Plan—the Mohawk Tribe of Indians, who claim that as a sovereign state they are immune from taxation and say they are blown if they are going to let the Government have so much as a nickel from the old oak chest. Their hereditary chief Alex Gray—surely this is a misprint for Flying Cloud or Bounding Beaver or something like that—has issued a statement to the press that any official entering the reservation to collect income tax from brave or squaw will be treated as a burglar. And we all know how Red Indians treat burglars. The unhappy slob gets scalped before they can say What ho.

Little wonder that Robert Clark, who runs the local tax office, informs us that "attempts at direct collection have failed." All American income tax

collectors have lovely heads of hair, and they have no wish to jeopardize them. At the moment of going to press Mr. Clark and his colleagues are still watching the situation closely and telling one another that they would go into the reservation like a shot and skin Alex Gray—I'm sure that name must be Hiawatha or Little Mist Above the Mountains—to the bone, only they feel a nasty cold coming on and their doctor says they ought to stay indoors. (Mr. Clark has an ingrowing toenail, which prevents him getting around.) From Alex Gray (Big Chief On Whom It Is Unsafe To Try Any Rannkazoo?) nothing has been heard since that first press release, but it is known that he wrote to Sears Roebuck the other day asking them to send him a grindstone—mail order—as he wanted to sharpen his tomahawk.

The sympathetic tear which we drop for Robert Clark must be accompanied by another for Aaron J. Wolfe, a popular motorist of Louisville, Ky., who went out for a spin not long ago and collided with the car of Edward



L. Shearn. The crash, besides causing \$185 damages, left Mr. Wolfe's automobile straddled across some railway lines, and while he and Mr. Shearn were threshing out the various points of interest in the affair a train came along and rammed it, causing another \$800 damages. The police then arrived and handed Mr. Wolfe a ticket for reckless driving. He generally walks now when he wants to go anywhere. Says it's healthier.

Quite a bit of excitement there was one day last month at the Sheepshead Bay branch of the Lincoln Savings Bank of Brooklyn, and Augustus C. Froeb is telling his friends that his whole past life flashed before him. Mr. Froeb, who is seventy-five, having been for more than thirty years senior trustee of the institution, takes a warm personal interest in it, and was shocked to learn one morning that bandits had visited it and got away with \$72,679. The thought occurred to him that in the event of another such incident it would be well to be assured that the employees of the bank were up on their toes and ready to cope with it, so he put on dark spectacles and a false moustache and walked in and shouted "This is a stick-up. Everybody lie down on the floor," upon which five customers, four cashiers and a secretary did. But he had reckoned without Frank Friel, the bank guard, who whipped out his gun and took aim.

Fortunately, before extremes could be gone to, the quick-thinking branch manager, Paul McGuirk, had realized that a real stick-up man would have said "lay," not "lie," and brushing aside Frank Friel's bullets he tore off Mr. Froeb's moustache and spectacles and identified him, just as three detectives who had been stationed outside the bank since the previous robbery and thirty more detectives from headquarters raced up.

"I was only testing them," said Mr. Froeb, and the thirty-three detectives agreed that it was an excellent idea, but hinted that it would be better if the senior trustee did not do it again. Mr. Froeb said he wouldn't.

A man who feels a little envious of Frank Friel's efficiency and that way he has of not shooting himself when he pulls out his gun is Richard Hill of

Ukiah, California, who the other day, practising the quick draw as done by cowboys on the television screen, plugged himself in the right leg. Sheriff Gino Stephani of Ukiah told reporters that Mr. Hill shot himself in the same leg with the same pistol on July 27 last. It is probably some consolation to the latter to feel that, like the Canadian Mounted Police, he always gets his man, but only, one fears, a small consolation. Legs cost money.

Two little stories—stop me if you have heard them—which illustrate something or other in American life. The first is about the Texas millionaire who sent a suit to the cleaner's and was informed by him that he had inadvertently left endorsed negotiable cheques to the value of \$65,000 in one of the pockets. Impressed by the man's honesty, he told him to keep it.

The other is about the man in Hollywood who drove up to a psychiatrist's office in a chauffeured Rolls Royce and told him that he had a problem.

"But first," he said, "I suppose that you would like to know a little of my background. I live in one of the most beautiful homes on Coldwater Canyon, have two swimming pools (one for the children), have a private helicopter to take me to the beach club, belong to three exclusive golf clubs, man a yacht with a crew of six and generally average about a thousand dollars a month with my Diner's Club bills."

The psychiatrist seemed surprised.

"Under those conditions, it is difficult to see what kind of a problem you can have."

"My problem, doctor," said the patient, "is that I only make fifty dollars a week."

## Man in Apron

by

Larry.





# The House Journal of Monumastic

The Plastic Monument  
People

Vol. CXIV

No. 19

● **Tasteful** Graveyard  
furniture in plastic

● **Subsidiaries:**  
Gnomastic  
Homastic  
Famastic

● **Monumastic**  
lasts more than a  
lifetime.

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## EDITORIAL

Hello there,—

We've got a jolly interesting lot of things for you in this issue. We need hardly remind you that we in the great Monumastic family fulfil a noble task in the community. Few there are in the world to-day who can be so certain of having the products of their working day stand revered by posterity throughout the ages.

Under the dynamic, inspiring, and at the same time humane leadership of our Chairman, Sir Nathaniel Bane, the most up to date technological developments have been adapted to the purpose of providing a wide variety of enduring and memorable monuments of good taste at reasonable prices for those who have passed away the world over.

In this issue, on page 1, we are privileged to report a message from the Chairman himself on the occasion of the new factory opening.

(NOTE.—The management takes no responsibility for the opinions expressed in this Journal and, in the event of their disagreeing with them, neither does the Editor.)

## COVER PICTURE

The new Mausoleum Moulding shop, Watlingpool-under-Slough, at night. Photograph by Mr. I. C. de Lyte (Advertising and Publicity) Sensichromatic, Panchromatic 22/34, 1/500th sec. Zeiss, Telescopic Lens, f.29.6.

## PICTURE OF THE YEAR

(Front inside Cover)  
The new moulding shop by day. Bob Down (Facsimile Granite Chippings Section), has captured the essentially exciting spirit of modern industry in an eye-catching picture—well done Bob. (Kodak 120, Box Brownie).

## The Chairman's Speech

This is a proud day in the history of the Monumastic Group. Founded over 150 years ago in a small monumental mason's yard, your Company has gone forward step by slow step until to-day it is a household word wherever mortality reigns. So popular have our products become—to my knowledge we have never received a single complaint from the users of our goods—that more production capacity was essential. Everyone is to-day aware of the importance of the growing teenage market—when I remind you ladies and gentlemen that the teenage bulge of to-day is the obsequy bulge of sixty years hence you will I am sure appreciate the wisdom of your Board's expansion programme. (*Applause.*)

I would like now to turn to another important development—the change in title from Monumastic Monuments Ltd. to the Monumastic Group. Your Board and I have been concerned for some time that the Company had not been sharing in the ever-increasing sales of consumer durables—due primarily to the ever-increasing durability of the consumer. (*Laughter.*) Consequently we have sought out other fields in which our experience may be put at the service of the public.

The first associated Company was Famastic, a 24-hour service producing plastic replicas of famous men or of loved ones. Developed out of our small but thriving death mask business we soon found that there was a large and untapped export market in Russia and the Middle East for full-size, easily disposable, plastic statues.

The second subsidiary to be established was Gnomastic. You will all be familiar with that delightfully British contribution to horticulture, the garden gnome in painted cement. A worthy product of the creative endeavour of British industry indeed. But we in this modern age are able, nay, it is our duty, to recreate the achievements of the past in forms no longer subject to the erosion of time. It was in this spirit that we conceived and launched our complete range of realistic garden ornaments in never-fade no-sharp-edges plastic. The venture has, I am glad to report, been an enormous success.

Finally, I would like to say a word about our most recent development. Homastic, our complete wall or ceiling décor, available by the yard in 10-foot rolls in an

(Continued on p. 3)



Some of the staff enjoying a quip of Sir Nathaniel Bane's

## KIDDIES' KORNER



Here's a pretty corner in a shady Garden of Remembrance, kiddies. You can see in the picture some of the lovely Monumastic products that your Daddy makes at work. If you look closely you can also see the vicar, two pall bearers, the man in whose favour the will was made out, and two disappointed beneficiaries. (You can find these words in the dictionary.)

## FOR THE UNDER 9s

Paint a narrow black border round the outside of the picture. There will be prizes of 2s. 6d. for the three children with the steadiest hands.

## APPOINTMENTS

**Dr. (Doc) Dworf, Ph.D.**, joined as Head of Gnomastic Developments from Walt Disney Productions, 1st February.



Mr. N. Bane

**Mr. N. Bane**, the chairman's son, joined 11th January. Replaced Mr. R. Hearse as Sales Director 12th January.

**Roger Wafells** joined as Homastic Design Director. Mr. Wafells has a wide designing experience. 1930, Houndsditch Technical College (Evening Department).

1938, Sadler's Wells Scene Painting Unit. 1942, Sgt. Army Camouflage Training School. 1946, Assistant Editor *Home and Away*. 1952, Responsible for décor Everywoman's Home Exhibition. 1956, Awarded Design in Industry (Palm Leaf) for work on bathrooms in New Towns.

## WELFARE SCHEME

Starting from the New Year, a further benefit has been made available to pensioners. On receipt of their first pension payment they will be asked to name their executor to whom a voucher will be sent by return, entitling them to obtain, upon the pensioner's decease, free of charge, any monument from the then current catalogue range. Thus will one further burden be removed from the minds of those who have served the Company so faithfully all their working days.

## KEEP FIT

At the last meeting the Personnel Committee decided that the "Keep Fit" classes did not coincide with Company policy, and despite good attendances at the mixed sessions the Social Society has regretfully decided to discontinue further meetings.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR SIR,—For the past ten years I have made a point of visiting a different part of the country each summer on my motor scooter and calling at as many of the company's installations as possible. So far I have personally visited 512,211 resting places. Is this a record? I would be interested to hear if any of your readers have the same hobby as mine.—Yours everlastingly, J. B. Goole. (Broken Columns Section.)

## GIN A BODY

From James (Jamie) McGonagall, who recently transferred from Epitaphs and Inscriptions to Accounts Dept., come some moving verses. Jamie tells us there's a long literary tradition in his family.

The wind howled, the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed,  
And in the graveyard many marble tombstones to the ground were dashed.

But sleeping easily in their beds were such widows and widowers  
as stick  
To the unbreakable one-piece moulded memorials of Monumastic.

Well done, Jamie. A worthy effort from a compatriot of Robbie Burns.

More about our  
Founder  
No 92

It is not a source of shame, but of pride, to the firm that Nahum Bane was sent to prison in 1873 for infringing the copyright of the Albert Memorial. Noticing how suitably solemn was the attitude and expression of many of the figures on the frieze round the base of this stupendous monument, he took a month off from his works in Stifffield (leaving his brother Nehemiah to keep an eye on things), hired a posse of impoverished sculptors and took them, night after night, to make plaster casts of the most promising figures. Seldom had his organizing genius shone more brightly. Alas, a disgruntled pre-Raphaelite informed against him, and one night he and his workmen were surrounded by an overwhelming force of police. In vain he argued that he was both subsidizing the arts and popularizing, throughout the provinces, one of the glories of our national sculpture. To the everlasting shame of English justice he was sentenced to three month's imprisonment.

(Do not miss next month's fascinating instalment. Order your copy now. That is an order.)

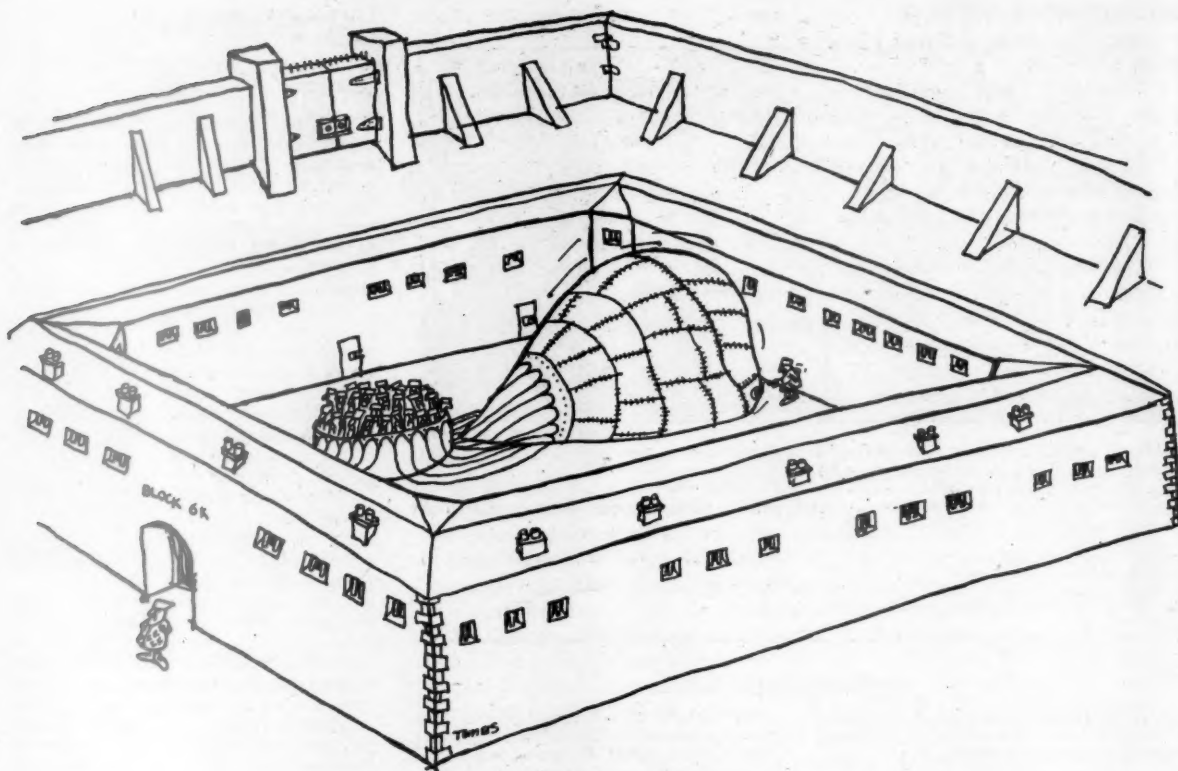


## Miss Monumastic, 1960



Atropos ("Trophy") Shovel, of the epitaph-correcting department, adopts a favourite pose





## For Fish and Freedom

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

**"FOR** fish and freedom" proclaims the poster outside the docks at Larne, for the Government of Eire has recently defined the territorial waters round its coast within which all Irishmen may freely fish and from which all foreigners are excluded, and, since it does not recognize the infamous partition of the country, it has announced most logically that Northern Irishmen are also Irishmen and may fish at will within Irish territorial waters. Boats of under 75 feet in length that come from Northern Ireland may fish within the "base lines," while boats from Britain and other foreign parts are excluded.

This is an insult which loyal Orangemen could not be expected to overlook. A lot of Northern Irishmen, it must be confessed, do not seem to mind, but

James Wilson of Larne, a Unionist, a Presbyterian, a fisherman and a Member of the Lodge, announced that the papishers of the South could keep their waters. They need not expect that he would go within miles of their stinking shores for all the fish in creation. They would be expecting him to eat the stuff on a Friday next. But he did not allow for the treacherous currents around Hook Head nor for the faultiness of his compass. He drifted in towards the shore, flying a Red Ensign, and before he knew where he was the coastguard's cutter was alongside.

"Yer in the territorial waters of the Irish Republic," said the coastguard through his megaphone.

"So bloody what?" was James's crisp repartee, as he tried to spit at the coastguard's Irish flag, but, since he

was not very good at spitting, the gob fell non-committally into the sea between the two vessels.

But when the coastguard climbed on board and, looking at James's papers, that he came from Larne, his tone wholly changed.

"Why, I thought you were a bloody Englishman," said the coastguard.

James explained with some lucidity that if any bloody Englishman had called him a bloody Englishman he would have pushed his face in, but that that did not mean that he would allow any bloody papisher to call him a bloody papisher. He was an Orangeman, and that he was. The coastguard's instructions were not to arrest any Northern Irishman whom he might find fishing in territorial waters, but James insisted that it would be an

insult to Northern Ireland were he not arrested. The coastguard refused point-blank to arrest him.

"You may fish here," said the coastguard.

"I may not," replied James in fury.

"Do you think that the prisons of Ireland have nothing better to put in them than the likes of you?" snapped back the coastguard.

As so often, it was Providence that stepped in to solve what was an otherwise insoluble problem. To help the argument, James produced a bottle of whiskey and, as they sat arguing, each getting angrier and angrier, the tide turned and the boat began drifting out again to sea. By the time that the bottle was finished, they were well outside territorial waters.

"It is a miracle," said the coastguard, piously crossing himself.

"It is not a miracle at all," said James with sturdy Presbyterian scepticism.

Anyway the problem was eventually solved.

But somehow the story in some sort of garbled form got into the papers—into the Dublin papers first, and then was copied from them into the Belfast papers—and James had something to explain away when he got back to Larne. Was it really true, asked his horrified fellow-fishermen, that James had sailed into the territorial waters of Southern Ireland after the Southern Irish had said that he might? If they had forbidden him entry, if he had gone in poaching, they could have forgiven him, but to go in when he was allowed to go in—that was more than a loyal Ulsterman could understand. Was he turning into a Shinner in his middle age?

"If you had been drunk now," they said, "it'd be plain seeing."

Now the truth was that, though indeed James was drunk by the time he drifted out of territorial waters, he was cold sober when he drifted in. Still he had the evidence of the empty bottle. Did honour demand that he tell nothing but the truth?

"Drunk, is it?" he cried, producing the empty bottle. "I had drink taken. Do you think that I would have spoken to a coastguard if I had been sober—even if he had been a coastguard from Northern Ireland?"

This indeed seemed to his fellow fishermen a powerful and convincing

point. They all moved over to the far end of the bar to debate the matter out in the privacy of committee. Heads wagged. Fists, as a matter of form, were shaken, but it was clear that on the balance the counsels of mercy were to prevail.

"Coastguards," said one doubting Thomas, "is sometimes sober."

But such an occurrence in the general view was so unusual that it was only

charitable to give James the benefit of the doubt.

"Seeing that they was both drunk," said one sage statesman—and paused to refresh himself—"what harm could there be in it at all if they was both drunk?"

"Seeing that they was both drunk," agreed another, "there is no stain on his patriotism nor besmirchment on his character."

## I was a Teenage (p.t.o.) r

By RICHARD MALLET

IN the darkened cinema a thumping tune faintly reminiscent of "Begin the Beguine" shivers the thick air, and a girl's voice sings in a low, husky tone:

*Dictionnaire . . . Philosophique—*  
It has all the words, and I haven't any . . .

followed by several other lines vibrant with passion, up to the soaring emotional cry that ends the chorus:

Till finalee we're danning cheek to cheek—  
*Dictionnaire . . . Philosophique!*

Well, no, perhaps we haven't had that one yet; but if they did decide to make

a Hollywood film of Voltaire's great work that, or something not remarkably unlike it, is what we should hear while we were looking at the credit titles. It means just as much as most title-songs, anyway.

I see that composers are making a fuss about keeping their rights in music written for films, and no wonder. For years now every second film seems to have had its title set to music, and quite possibly well up in the hit parade before the film has even arrived. Most recent, at the time of writing, is *Pillow Talk*; but think of them all in the last few months, even—*Beloved Infidel*, *But Not for Me*, *The Best of Everything*, *I'm All*



"Ah! Paris! Here we come! Look—there's Notre Dame! Sacre Coeur! and over there the Madeleine and St. Denis Abbey Church!"

*Right Jack, Ask Any Girl, This Earth is Mine . . . and going further back, Island in the Sun, Count Your Blessings, The Ten Comm—*

What? Oh. Well, anyway, you see what I mean. The fact is, looking back over the list, I honestly don't remember whether some of them were varnished with songs at the entrance or not. But it is a safe bet that any title that *might* be the first line or the refrain of a song was written into one on principle, even if it didn't survive to the final version of the film, or wasn't actually sung. Sometimes one can tell from the rhythm of the music behind the credits that its title is the title of the picture, even if there are no words; I thought I could detect this only a week or two ago in *The Jayhawkers*.

Was there one for *Desire Under the Elms*? It seems a natural, though there's always the Production Code and the Legion of Decency, but I don't remember. Then how about *Mourning Becomes Electra*?

. . . and after the night,  
Morning becomes electr—rical,  
magical, bright . . .

—for remember, there is very great latitude; the *song* public is not expected to—and won't—be bothered by any irrelevancy. The separate performance is the thing. Naturally the film producers want to encourage it, for each



"I don't seem to be able to pin him down, Mummy. Now he's on about diamond rings being South African goods."

one means an indirect advertisement for the film, as well as song-royalties—which the composers, just as naturally, want to collect themselves. When Bing Crosby was in a film called *Man on Fire* he portrayed, as I said at the time, a man on fire with distress and desperation because he was losing his young son to his divorced wife; but the title song began "When you're in love—you're a man awn fi-er . . ." I should not have welcomed the job of making the words of a song with that refrain fit the situation. "Honey" rhyming with "alimony" perhaps? . . . and considering what they'll do nowadays "fire" certainly might rhyme with "lawyer." A year or two ago there was a song in which "poetry" rhymed with "fir-tree"; with my own ears, which I always prefer to use even for this kind of listening, I heard a record of Eve Boswell singing it, and what's more it *did* rhyme.

It's a mutual benefit association: the song is publicity for the film, and the

film—and every printed, broadcast or conversational mention of the film—for the song. Neither can lose. As with other forms of subliminal advertising, the intellect doesn't come into it at all; mere repetition of the name, more or less below the level of consciousness, does the trick. The title will come to mind whenever the average person not already committed to a film or a song wants to pay to see or hear one. That's the idea.

Now you are wondering what the title of this piece has to do with it. In fact I put it up there as an example of just the sort of irrelevancy I mean. It has no more to do with this article than the titles of many films have to do with them. At this very moment I'm in negotiation with the man who wrote it (we are sitting at the same table—in the same chair, in fact); he wants to be able to collect royalties from people who quote it without having read the article. As this lets you out, you'll agree with me that he's quite right.

## Note to Burglars

By B. A. YOUNG

I WANT you to know, whoever you are, that I quite understand that we must all choose our own mode of living, and that if you embrace this dangerous and, on the whole, ill-rewarded profession I am not blaming you; though I would be glad if you would take your custom elsewhere.

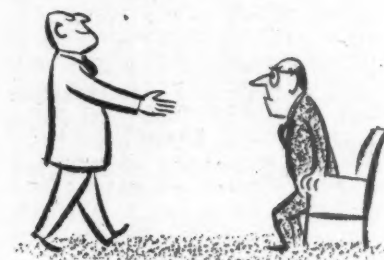
A lot of people have a squeamish feeling about having you in the place at all, reading their private documents (which is an activity they all for some reason imagine you indulging in), but I positively assure you that that aspect doesn't worry me a bit. For one thing, your choice of my gramophone records marks you out as a burglar of refined taste; though I ought to point out that musical worth and monetary worth don't always correspond, and in your painstaking efforts to remove the Beethoven, Brahms and Mozart and leave the Bartók and Stravinsky behind you lit on all the one-guinea discs instead of the thirty-nine-and-sixpenny ones.

If you do indeed read my private documents, which seems to me an odd thing to do when I might be home at any minute and catch you with your suitcase, I mean my suitcase, full of stolen property—if you really do read them, do tell me what you thought of my novel. So far you are the only member of the public who has seen it. There is a burglary in it, somewhere about page 260 of the typescript, which is based very largely on my recollection of your first visit here about four years ago, though I've had to romanticize it a bit by making you steal some secret documents instead of a portable typewriter, four shirts and a pair of cuff-links. I hope you got that far.

Come to think of it, I might have liked you better if you'd taken the typescript instead of those records. My agent has a copy, so it wouldn't have mattered much. But you didn't take my copy of *Lolita* either. Perhaps you don't care for reading.

I am sorry you didn't like my Madeira.





To have removed a half-full bottle of whisky and a three-quarters-full bottle of gin, and to have ignored the unopened bottle of Grand Cama de Lobos (Solera 1864), suggests an insensitive streak in you. More: to have left the Madeira without even putting a fingerprint on it was downright inconsiderate.

I am glad you found out the mistake about the shirts. The shirts you took the first time you came here were made to measure for me, which means that if they fitted you round the neck and down the sleeves you were a size so unusual you could never be fitted "over the counter." If Garth of the *Daily Mirror* were ever to marry and have a son of roughly the same proportions as himself, my shirts might fit the boy by the time he was about fourteen. In the circumstances it was wise of you to skip the haberdashery this time and concentrate on property less idiosyncratic.

There is just one more point before I close, and that is about typewriters. You will remember that the first time you came you took my Espresso portable with the Hungarian keyboard, but were in so much of a hurry—having perhaps been delayed by reading some more than usually fascinating correspondence—that you left the lid behind. Shirts I can live without, gramophone records

too, but not a typewriter, so that by the time you came next I had a brand-new Trattoria Salone 69, bought out of the largesse bestowed on me by my insurance company. I know the lid of this one takes a good deal of putting on, and of course there was a neat plastic cover on the machine; anyway, you left the lid behind again. On your third visit you naturally made straight for the little Mignon which had replaced the Trattoria, and I'm damned if you didn't tuck that away in my laundry-box (on which I had to pay ten bob for losing it, by the way) without the lid.

So the situation now is that I type on a Ruston-Bucyrus "Mammoth" so enormous that it would need an organized raid by several strong men to remove it, but I still have three spare lids piled in a corner of what for want of a better word I call my study, waiting either for you to come and take them away or for the police to come and restore the typewriters to them.

Frankly, while we are on the subject, I would advise you not to take any more typewriters if you are coming again. The fact is that without a typewriter I am unable to earn very much money, and there will be all the less for you to take next time you look in.

By the way, there is one thing I

expect you would like to know. Neither I nor Detective-Sergeants MacArthur, Bostock, Wright and Kellaway, the able and zealous officers who have from time to time gone into the matter of your activities, have the faintest idea how you got in. The police, in fact, are baffled; and so am I.

## Countdown

HOW do I know I'm getting old?  
Cape Canaveral leaves me cold,  
And when a rhesus rides the sky  
I can't, however hard I try,  
Regard him as a hero.

How do I know I'm just a prig?  
I spin not, neither do I dig  
The top ten discs: no squarer man  
Exists between Uzbekistan  
And Rio de Janeiro.

How do I know I'm getting on?  
That old "One, two, three—go!" is  
gone:  
My children, when they run a race,  
Prepare themselves for flight through  
space  
With "Four, three, two, one—zero!"

—ANTHONY BRODE

# Who's Who in the Shops

By ALEX ATKINSON

IT came as no surprise to me to read the other day that model gowns consider themselves a cut above hosiery. I have no first-hand knowledge of life in either of these departments because I was in men's shoes myself; but I can confirm the findings of the survey commissioned by the Retail Distributors' Association, in two particulars anyway.

First, they were dead right about the question of status. I remember that on the day I joined men's shoes the buyer took me into an alcove between the specially reduced tan grain double-welt sports and the cabinet of laces and boot polish (this was where he normally hid, biting his nails, when a customer came

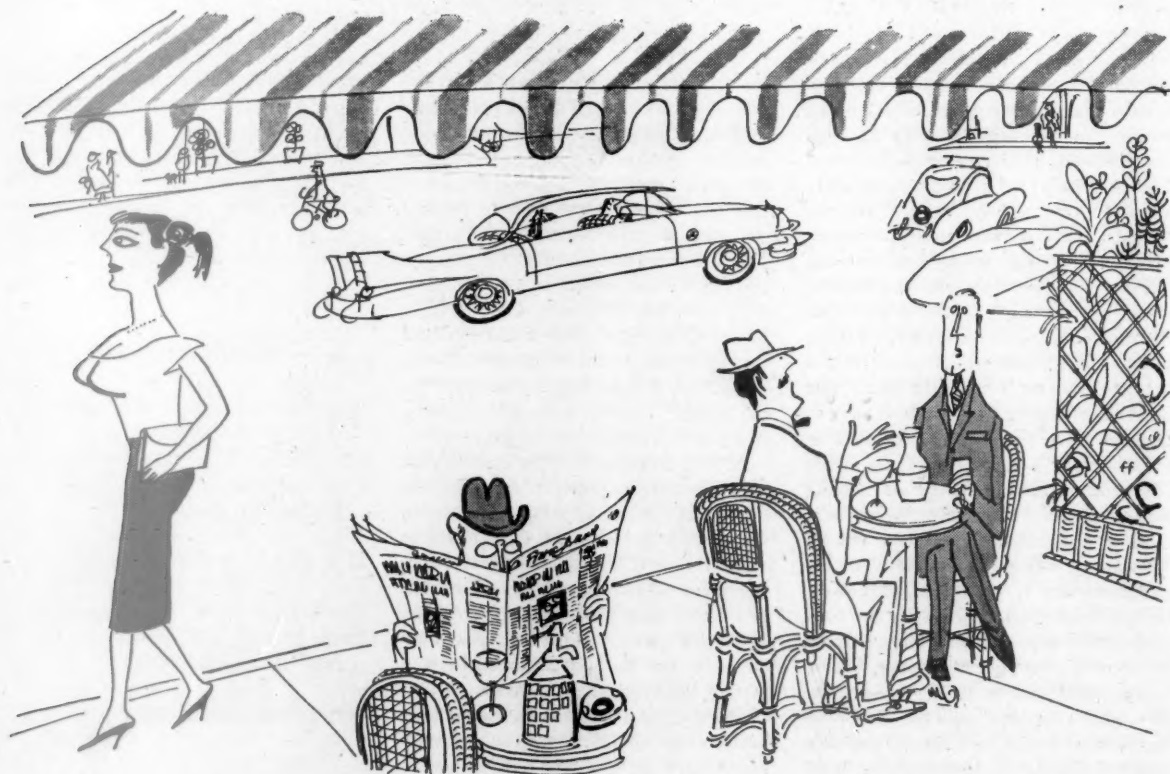
back raving because we'd sent him two odd spats) and explained my status in very solemn detail.

"I want you to remember," he said, "that you're in men's shoes, and as such you have a position to keep up. In men's shoes we do not rush through the store pell-mell, knocking down display cards, when we're going for our cups of tea, like lampshades or kitchen furniture: we walk casual, as though we wasn't going for our cups of tea at all. Also we are not by any means in the habit of lolling about at the tobacco kiosk inside the main entrance gassing with Norma, like trunks and leather goods and others I could name.

"Men's shoes has a certain dignity,

what you might call a tradition, and I'll thank you to watch it carefully unless you want a transfer to household gadgets double quick. Another thing. There are some we speak to and there are some we don't. We acknowledge curtain materials with a nod of the head, and you can smile at men's gloves if you like. We do not speak to bespoke tailoring until we are spoken to. Cafeteria we do not speak to at all, nor knitting patterns either, nor stationery, garden tools or dispatch, except in the course of business. Men's shirts you treat as an equal, likewise with perfumery, dressing gowns, carpets, second-floor millinery, and antiques.

"No, I'm telling a lie. With antiques



"I'm sorry. I didn't catch what you were saying . . ."

it doesn't do to get too familiar. I've seen them move away to another table in the canteen just because a boys' outfitting sat down next to them. They always take a sweet for afters, antiques, and lemon in their tea. I don't mind you fraternizing with ladies' shoes, but do not take them to the pictures. We in men's shoes are regarded as their superiors, and as such we have always chosen our mates from either gowns or inexpensive jewellery. Of course, if it's just idle pleasure you want there's always silk scarves and hairdressing—but be discreet, and I'll thank you to keep your eyes off Miss Galsworthy."

When I tell you that my duties chiefly involved handing the buyer his shoehorn, shining size sevens for the window, writing price-tickets and dusting rows of boxes, you might think that this briefing was unnecessarily elaborate. I assure you, however, that without it my life would have been a bitter hell of *gaffes*, snubs and missed opportunities. With it I was able to fit neatly into position in one of the most complicated hierarchies ever devised. I might not have sold many shoes, but by heavens I knew my place—and that's more than the customers did, which brings me to my second point.

According to the survey, the attitude that the customer is always right makes the saleswoman feel socially inferior. I would go further, and say that customers have a damnable knack of making saleswomen feel inferior (or even salesmen, which is worse) *whether they're right or not*. I can remember customers deliberately refraining from passing comment on my old school tie. I can remember them brushing aside my favourite opening remark ("By jove, I'll bet it's warmer than this in Beirut, where I usually spend a month of my summer hols, what?") and plunging immediately into some sordid complaint about toecaps pressing down and causing bunions.

Do you think I could get any of them to believe I knew what Rattigan was really driving at in his new play, or persuade them that I was trying to decide whether to buy a Mondrian or a Matthew Smith? I could not, any more than I could get them to understand that I was not a salesman at all really, but a notorious man-about-town working for laughs and pin money. "Good God," I remember saying to one chap—

a common-or-garden electrician, by the look of him—"do you honestly think I care a tuppenny damn about your blasted goloshes? Can't you see I'm trying to remember the first theme of Brahms's Third, and wondering whether to invite you to my sister's wedding reception?"

But it was no good. When it comes to customers you just can't establish contact. They come shuffling into the shop with work-worn hands, and get you at a disadvantage immediately by sneering at the higher things of life, and there's no surer way of making anyone feel socially inferior. But the worst of it is, when you get right down to it—you'll hardly credit this—all they really want to do is to *buy* things.

For my own part, I don't mind telling you I'm glad I'm out of it. I do all my shopping by post nowadays. I wouldn't go into a shop if you paid me. The assistants frighten me to death.



## Forty Years On

OH, to think of the things that will still go on  
When the witty, the wise, the clever,  
The beautiful, marvellous thing that is me  
Is dead and gone for ever.

Dvorak's "Humoresque" will be played,  
And that ghastly sea will pound,  
And Cadogan Square, no doubt, will stand  
Long after I'm underground.

Though the span of my days is measured,  
And numbered my earthly hours,  
The crinoline skirts for telephones,  
And the artificial flowers,

The advertisements for detergents,  
And that maddening "Song of the Flea,"  
And Bubbles, of course, and *Ivanhoe*  
Will last to eternity.

Oh to think that blancmange will still go on,  
And probably Mrs. Dale,  
When the beautiful, marvellous thing that is me  
Has been taken to Putney Vale.

— VIRGINIA GRAHAM



In the



City

## Bankers on Velvet

THE bankers have never had a year like it; and it looks like keeping fine for them. The chairmen have, as usual, been modestly reticent about their domestic affairs, though they have left us in no doubt about their views on the state of the nation and of the world. As most of them see that wider picture, all is well—indeed so well that Lord Aldenham of the Westminster could not refrain from musing that there must be a snag somewhere and that “when very many of us are reading our barometers as set fair it is time to watch your step.”

If there was a common warning from the bankers it was that the boom in which we find ourselves might acquire a slightly inflationary tinge. The danger is certainly present as the revival in the heavy industries adds its own buoyancy to the effervescence of the trade in consumer goods. At the first hint of a return to inflation the Bank of England, with the approval of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, may be expected to take appropriate action—indeed it has done so by putting up the Bank Rate, and after the first emotional outburst of resentment we shall all probably find that it makes very little difference to this affluent society of ours.

One chairman who said a great deal about the affairs of his own bank was Lord Monckton of the Midland. Judging by the exceptional jump in its profits in 1959 the Midland is still pulling in the dividends for its initiative in getting the cloth cap customer into its branches. Personal loans and cheque accounts are drawing steadily increasing business. There are more of these “popular avenues” to be explored. Which, for example, is to be the first bank whose trustee department will be prepared to offer the “professional investment advice” that will be needed when the list of trustee securities is extended and which the small investor

will require in increasing measure as time goes on? Steady now; don't trample Mr. Punch in the rush.

New gimmicks apart, the solid orthodox business of banking must be doing admirably. The most remunerative of the banks' assets, their loans and advances, have risen by about £700 million over the past year. This may have meant selling investments, but the switch has been highly profitable. Trade and industry are so prosperous that the customary provisions for bad debts must have been far smaller than usual. The banks, moreover, are only just beginning to gather the profits of their very timely jump in the hire purchase credit business. Lloyds in particular should do very well with this, given their alliance with what used to be the Commercial Bank of Scotland, the doughty vanguard of the bankers' invasion of this very profitable and still expanding field of finance.

All bank profits have gone up during the past year, and the reality is probably

far better than the published figures suggest. Banks share with insurance companies the privilege of not having to disclose their true profits and reserves. All we know is that when they show increased profits the true profits have also gone up. For 1959 the real profits probably rose appreciably faster than the published figures suggest. As the same beneficial winds will continue to blow in 1960 it seems highly probable that the rise in profits this year will continue and that a little more of the truth will be allowed to appear in the declared profits and even in the dividends.

If bank shares in general are as promising as these indications suggest, one obvious way of securing an interest in a wide selection of them is through the Bank Unit, a trust run by the Bank Insurance Trust group. Its portfolio contains all the important British banks and a goodly selection of banks operating overseas. It should be on velvet in 1960.

— LOMBARD LANE

In the



Country

## Word Starvation

THIS is an age of free speech and economic censorship. Last year over 14,000 new titles were published in England alone: yet half the classics are out of print. The costs of printing and binding are now so high that publishers can't take risks with new authors. In a period of mass communication we are back to manuscripts being handed around. It's a pity they're not on vellum.

A century ago people used to retire to the country to read. Were they to do so to-day they would have to take their books with them. I have just tried to get a copy of Cobbett. Not a single copy to be purchased in the whole of the West Country. That is hardly surprising since we have scarcely a single bookshop worthy of the name west of Bath.

I suppose one could define a bookshop as an emporium where the written word has some sort of precedence over detergents. There used to be such a place in Bideford: the proprietor liked books, he read them himself. It was he who introduced me to the *Eikon Basilike* and made me realize that when we executed Charles I we beheaded a major prose writer. But that is a decade ago. Now his shop is closed. True, we have our public libraries . . . Last week I asked one librarian for copies of Tusser and Tull. Not even a reference book referred to them.

Reading used to be a country pursuit. Country houses were built with libraries. What was known as the gentry looked at something more than the *TV Times*. Nor was this bookish habit confined to eccentrics or the clergy. Our hunting squires could wear out three mounts, then spend an evening with Golding's *Metamorphosis*. With what? Precisely.

— RONALD DUNCAN

★

“HIPPODROME, HOLBEACH  
Thursday, Friday, Saturday

AL COPONE.—The true story of a gangster who rose to such power in Chicago in the 1920's that his name was known throughout the world.”—*Lincolnshire Free Press*  
Except at Holbeach.

# Toby Competitions

## No. 98—Moonshine

COMPETITORS are invited to write the copy for an advertisement urging the reader to take a trip to the moon.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, February 5, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 98, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

## Report on Competition No. 95 (Spine-Chiller)

Competitors were asked for a ghost story involving a typewriter, an electronic computer, a helicopter, a TV set or a hot-dog. Those with the nastiest minds generally picked the hot-dog; but the unconscious cannibalism motif palled. So did typewriters that typed the murderer's name and computers that forecast the inquirer's death and TV sets that showed characters shocked by the sight of the viewer. The final selection was difficult, but for various reasons, including tension and simplicity, the winner of the framed *Punch* original is:

R. G. R. MARSDEN  
HOLLY TREE FARM  
KIRDFORD  
BILLINGSBURST  
WEST SUSSEX

They'd never see him. The light was fading and the helicopter was only a blurred outline against the leaden sky. He screamed at it and waved his shirt frantically, clutching the chimneypot with one hand. Inches below him the flood water swirled hungrily past the sides of the roof. Now the machine was directly overhead. He grabbed desperately at the rope ladder that danced towards him through the gloom.

For several minutes he lay on the floor of the cabin, sobbing weakly. Then, still trembling, he sat up and looked about him. The lighted interior seemed snug and secure, until he realized that, apart from himself, the helicopter was empty.

Among the runners-up were:

Our own set had gone for repairs: in its place I found an antiquated-looking TV when I got home. And every blessed programme we got that night had horses in it. The set seemed to select them. We had Wild West dramas, Wagon Train—the lot. But, stranger, all the humans had an equine look! Dimbleby was pure Suffolk Punch; Michelmore had a tiny wrapping of lambs-wool on the bridge of his glasses; even the Hasses swam about like sea-horses. And the "Tall Girls" stepped like high spirited fillies with their ribbon-banded fetlocks. The news reader wore blinkers, I swear.

Cigarette burns on the cabinet of the set made up a brand looking like "— B.Q."

Next morning? A faint ammoniacal odour, horse-nailhead marks on the parquet, and horsehair in little whorls on the floor.

Of the hippic set itself—no trace.—*Eric Edwards, 25 Wetstone Lane, West Kirby, Wirral*

It was of Elsa's hands that he thought as he sat before his typewriter. The finger-nails had been stained blood-red. Blood! He shivered. But they would never find her body.

"Robinson, are you mad? D'you realize you've typed these letters in red? Isn't it bad enough having Elsa unaccountably absent, without your playing such tricks? Do the lot again!" Jones, the chief clerk, was shaking with rage.

Robinson inserted a new black ribbon, and began the task. But still the type was red. He hammered the keys in anger: then in frenzy. The red began to smear, to trickle. He touched it. It was sticky, like blood.

Horrified, he ripped off the paper and flung it away. As he did so, a pair of white hands, their finger-nails stained blood-red, appeared from nowhere and inserted a fresh sheet of paper into the typewriter.—*G. J. Blundell, Littlewood, East Malling, Kent*

"The lab juts right into the hillside," I pointed out. "Perhaps there were caves."

"There were," he assented. "Flints and things were found. Well, as I was saying, we had UMIGEC here on simultaneous differential equations, but the answers kept arriving in terms of bones or reindeer. Quite absurd! But how should he know better? I saw him once: a tremendously tough-looking little chap in skins, with a huge club, sitting at the control-panel, puzzling over it. That was the night before Dr. Riemer was battered to death."

"Nasty," I said.

He nodded. "Now the most transistor-busting altercations go on in the depths of the machine. But what are we to do?"

"Leave a freshly-killed mammoth handy as a draw-off," I suggested.

"Where am I to get a freshly-killed mammoth?" he asked sarcastically.

"Try that little chap in skins," I said, dodging out.—*J. A. Lindon, 89 Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey*

The guests had gone—the sole remains from the party were some hot-dogs and nuts. My only dinner date that week was to entertain my elderly, childless godmother next evening. Suddenly the bell rang; I opened the door and in sailed my one hope of future independence—a day early! Anything even remotely American was anathema to her. Hot-dogs and cocktails—ye gods! Lifelong poverty stared me in the face.

I managed to greet her enthusiastically, saying I'd prepared a picnic meal as a surprise for her. While she removed her coat in my bedroom I hid the glasses, produced clean plates and then tremblingly awaited her reaction to American fare.

At the first bite: "Clever boy," she beamed. "My favourite *foie gras*, bless you; and I thought they looked like hot-dogs!"

I tasted unbelievably. *Foie gras* it was, but what supernatural agent had intervened to save my future?—*Mrs. W. F. Tulloch, 41 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7*

Book tokens to the above and also to:

Miss Carla Heayberd, 203 Preston Hill, Harrore, Middlesex; B. A. Murphy, 29 Hallam Crescent, Leicester; D. Craddock, 33, Turkey Street, Enfield; Miss Margaret Cresswell, 9, Brock Street, Bath; Ian Weinberg, Exeter College, Oxford

## THEN AS NOW

It is curious that some of his colleagues regarded Keene's work as vulgar.



THANKS TO THE EASTERN QUESTION.

Sunday School Teacher. "Of our many greatly esteemed, can any child tell us which is the greatest?"  
Sharp Scholar. "THE RUSSIAN TEACHER!"

May 26 1877

FOR  
WOMEN

## Heavy Francs

PARIS

JUST in case you are planning a visit to France in the near future I feel the least I can do is to explain about our New Francs. Before you leave you will probably be given at your local branch bank a lovely load of Nouveaux Francs, in *billets* and in *pièces*. "Easy as falling off a log," you say to yourself as you run through the stuff on the blanket of your Ferry bunk before turning in for the night. "Thirteen francs seventy centimes to the pound. Easy."

But you wait. The thing is that while you may sit, financially-speaking, pretty with all your Francs Nouveaux on arrival, who is to say that the first *garçon* to whom you give 5 NF for 1 NF 55 centimes' worth of *café-au-lait* and *croissant* will have 3 NF 45 centimes change?

He won't. He will still have OFs in his *gilet* pocket; or worse—a mixture of NFs and OFs. And your change will most likely read: 1 piece of 100 (OF), 1 piece of 1 NF, 1 piece of 50 (OF), 1 piece of 50 centimes (NF), 1 piece of 20 (OF), 2 pieces of 10 centimes (NF) and 1 piece of 5 (OF) that looks just like the 5 NF only it is in nickel.

Successive operations of this nature will fill your pockets with an ever-increasing number of OFs until, about the third day, you find yourself calculating 1,370 francs to the pound on the back of an envelope. You will then buy a bottle of Miss Dior which, let us say, costs 3,564 OFs—for of course by now you are thinking in OFs again—and you pay with a 10,000 OF note and get back 643 NF 60 centimes.

To work this out you then sit down at a *café* and order a Dubonnet. It costs, you see from the slip, 2 NF 40

centimes, and you give the waiter one of the nice new 5 NF pieces from the Miss Dior transaction and the change comes back on the saucer in a shower of 260 OFs. You have another Dubonnet and when you get up you leave what you think is 1 NF tip. But the waiter calls you back. It was a bright new 1 OF.

So far as I know, French cheques won't bother you on your trip. But just in case you are one of the clever ones with a franc account tucked away in France under a borrowed address, you will need help. Cheques are strictly Heavy. Choice however lies in the number and variety of mistakes you can make in their writing. In a three-page, closely printed, bi-lingual letter ending

with a terse "in the interest of their customers Banks will regard as irregular and may refuse any cheque which does not comply with these requirements," my Bank tells me exactly what to do.

To cut a long story short it all hinges on the placing of your "NF." In the space allotted to expressing the amount in figures you start by crossing out the B.P.F. which you have never noticed before and in its place you put B.P.NF followed by the amount. Thus: B.P.NF 432.55. But when it comes to the bit where you write the amount in words, you put Nouveaux Francs in full *after* the francs and *before* the centimes. Thus: *Quatre cent trente-deux Nouveaux cinquante cinq centimes*. And when you have got all that nice and straight you find you have dated your cheque 1959.

Of course by the time you get here things may have settled down. I hope so for your sake and that you have a lovely time. On the other hand, as everybody is collecting the new francs for all they are worth, as souvenirs, it is always possible that Monsieur Baumgartner may, in desperation, put the *virgule* back two places again and call the whole thing off.

— PHYLLIS HEATHCOTE

## Chic for Chicks

I DON'T know how long it is since any royalty visited the Royal Hotel in Woburn Place, or for that matter since an emperor visited the Imperial Hotel just up the street, but I can think of at least one crowned head who might have enjoyed a visit recently. The Nursery Goods Association has been staging its annual Nursery Goods Exhibition there, and journalists and retailers (though not, it seemed, mothers) have been getting boned up on the latest developments in nursery design. Tucked away among the seedy splendours of Bloomsbury was room upon room of cots, prams, potties and plastic bric-à-brac; to anyone whose heart is in the nursery it was an instructive experience. I don't mind looking at this kind of thing myself, provided there are not too many items in pale-blue or pale-pink plastic.

Lots of items *were*, of course, but all the same there were a few welcome

signs that elegance, for too long exclusive to Continental babies, is shortly going to attend British christenings, and prove itself high on the short-list of desirable fairy-godmothers. A smart little number was a grey and white striped high-chair





from Holland, beautifully made, with a Formica tray (much more sensible than plastic which cracks in no time) and chromium legs. The bottom part of the chair could later be made into a small table perfect for a toddler and the seat of the chair lifted up to accommodate a pot. (There seems something reprehensible about the widespread practice of using the high-chair both as lavatory seat and dining chair, but in fact the little savages never perform both functions at once, and one *has* to immobilize them somehow). Anyhow I thought this chair, imported by Gay Austin Ltd., made all the right points and was worth the ten guineas it cost. This was more than could be said for the fibreglass horrors sported elsewhere in the show at a pricey eight guineas.

A vulgarian's gem was a blue satin Carri-cot trimmed with real mink, retailing at around seventy-five guineas. It had mink all round the cover, mink handles, and a peep of real lace under the mink edge of the hood. I asked the exhibitor who would buy it (picturing the curly head of a bookie princess or a Pearly King's heir presumptive nestling sweetly among the pillows) but he said he didn't think anyone would, and he didn't like to think what would happen if a baby was sick among the mink. He was showing the item purely as an eye-catcher. Really refined, however, down to the last spoke on its huge wheels, the last high-light on its glossy *maquillage*, was the pram which Diana Dors has earmarked to be her very own when she blossoms into motherhood one day soon. The makers, Marmet, had a lovely picture of her all starry-eyed, and sadly shapeless, proving that

all of us women are sisters under our maternity smocks.

On the Dean's Rag Book stand I learned that a Mr. Dean had invented the idea in 1903 and Dean's are the only firm now producing them.

"But there are thousands of rag-books," I protested.

"Ah-hah!" said the salesman "you mean *cloth* books. Those are the ones that are full of stiffening and as soon as you wash them it all comes out and the books are no further good. A *rag* book doesn't do that."

At least one manufacturer had grasped the elementary fact, apparent to mothers before they set foot outside the maternity home, that the ambition of all babies is to destroy themselves, preferably painfully. My own daughter, now a randy two, flings herself almost daily over the bars of her cot, never pausing to reckon the consequences till her poor face is

being mashed by the lino. Blower Bros. of Nottingham showed me a cot for the older baby on which it is possible to lower the framework of the springs by about six inches when the time is ripe. They also had me running my hands up and down their woodwork ("Lovely bit of beech that!") and admiring their transfers (on the ends of cots) which certainly were pretty. Somehow, though, like the transfers used lavishly throughout the exhibition, they were not quite in the bull's-eye of taste; I don't know why.

Talking of taste, Enid Blyton's ubiquitous little mannikin was all over the place, too, as I had rather expected. Since most of us mothers have to learn to weave Noddy into the fabric of our lives, along with sieved spinach, measles and early instruction in the use of the urinary tract, we might as well make the best of it, I suppose.

— MONICA FURLONG

## Metropolitan Plus

DAY-tripping up to London for our pleasure,  
We country-dwellers have the edge on you  
Who live on site. The fullest, richest measure  
Of partified fruition is our due.  
Is it the thrilling strangeness of the plush  
Beneath the feet, the awnings, caviar,  
Waiters, martinis, music, glitter, rush,  
High talk and famous faces? Well, there *are*  
All those, of course; but what we *mean* is when,  
Teetering dressed-up to catch our country bus  
To catch our London train (eleven-ten),  
We see the tractor man, and he sees us.  
Watching that stare—wonder, a tinge of fright—  
We know that we have touched the social height.

— ANGELA MILNE



"Further to your letter . . ."

# + & - = CRITICISM



## BOOKING OFFICE

### Si Jeunesse Pouvait . . .

**The Secret Journey.** Harry Kullman.  
University of London Press, 12/6  
**Don Tiburcio's Secret.** Jeanne Loisy.  
University of London Press, 15/-  
**The Town that Went South.** Clive King.  
Macmillan.

ARE adults really the ideal persons to give advice on books or choose presents for children? Could not an enterprising store have in permanent residence a juvenile, bespectacled committee in a combined toy-cum-book department to which faltering gift-buyers might be directed? We all know the fate of the thirty-shilling fluffy animal which, however attractively gift-packaged, is instantly jettisoned in favour of a dirty piece of wood with a nail in it. Books are even chancier, not even the matchless *Moonfleet* winning universal

commendation in young reading circles. Elderly readers, filled with happy memories of goggle-eyed hours in a sunny hammock, might well opt for the works of Percy F. Westerman and Sapper. Has the Atom Age yet produced anything more exciting than those acid baths at Godalming, with the indolent Irma risking lung cancer on the chaise longue in every chapter? There isn't a book that wouldn't be all the livelier for a Dr. Lakington in it.

The University of London Press, wearying no doubt of space fiction and ponies doing deft things with their legs at gymkhanas, is developing a strong line in European children's books. In the trio of books under review, Jeanne Loisy's won the *Prix Jeunesse*, while Harry Kullman's scooped the Swedish *Nils Holgersson Plaque*. Clive King's English offering, though prizeless, is in much the same class.

I wish I could let my committee loose on them. They may be, for all I know, up every child's street. I find them wholesome but dull. *The Secret Journey* finds the Swedish boy David setting out on a forbidden day trip to the big city where he falls in with Dumpy, Skinny and Rose-Marie, all very consciously from a lower social stratum. The chums combine in a sort of South Side Story against a gang bearing the august name of The Fishers, led by a leering, gangling youth known as The Rotter, with a minor, corpseless rumble in and around some recently fumigated flats. There are certainly some Drummond echoes in the dialogue ("Chaps, chaps, we're in luck, chaps!") but David manages to catch the four o'clock bus for home with hardly a mark on him, just crumpled shorts, dusty shoes, and "a hair parting that might have been straighter." In my day, half of his hair would have been tugged out by the roots, but Europe's children have had their fill of horror and doubtless prefer things tidier and neater.

In *Don Tiburcio's Secret* we are swirled into a mad, gipsy world. Pepe, a "real gitano" of eleven, with a dumb mother and a migraine-racked, tambourine-thudding grandmother, lives in a ruined castle, with periodic visits to fairs, where the performing bear performs. The Secret is what Don Tiburcio has done with his treasure, left to his nephew, the schoolmaster, and the spy Pepe solves the riddle with some sharp deductions from the Escudo escutcheon. In between whiles Pepe poaches, and escapes from prison, and the schoolmaster obligingly builds a splendid new college with the cash. All very fine and proper, but one would swop the whole book for just one of those mysterious owl hoots in the dark garden of The Elms, Carl Peterson's spacious residence, with built-in cobra, in the stockbroker-belt.

*The Town that Went South* has a novel idea. A section of the South Coast breaks away from the mainland and floats out to sea, bearing with it the town of Ramsly and a sly, engaging cat called Gargoyle. Apart from seasickness

## THESE LOOKS SPEAK VOLUMES

### A Panorama of Publishers



19.—E. F. BOZMAN

BORN in England in 1895 of Irish-English parentage; completed school (Whitgift) and university (Cambridge) education, interrupted by World War I, before taking up the late Hugh R. Dent's invitation to join J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. After learning the production and costing side of publishing at the Temple Press (now the Aldine Press), Letchworth, joined the editorial department of which he became director in 1926. Developed the general list, both adult and juvenile, from a small nucleus and worked with the late Ernest Rhys on the editing of *Everyman's Library*. Later followed him as editor (1000th volume in 1956) and developed the *Everyman* reference books, notably *Everyman's Encyclopædia* (4th edition 1958, of which he was the editor).

the inhabitants suffer few discomforts, fetching up against France and Africa and a South Sea island, before finally becoming frozen into the great Southern icecap. It needs no committee to tell me that scientific youngsters (and which of them is not?) are going to find fault with the story at every step.

— ARTHUR MARSHALL

## NEW FICTION

**The Catalyst.** G. O. Jones. Faber, 13/6  
**The Long Night.** Julian Mayfield. Michael Joseph, 13/6

**Blackberry Wilderness.** Sylvia Berkman. Gollancz, 16/-

**Nobody Knows what the Stock will Bring, and Other Stories.** Charles Criswell. Hutchinson, 13/6

AS more and more American novels pour into this country the difference between the English and American novel begins to show itself more clearly. It is nicely pointed up by this week's selection. Richard Chase and other critics have argued that the predominant strain in the American novel is *romance*. The romance-novel heightens life; it tends toward melodrama and idyll; it is not too concerned with verisimilitude or irony or distance; it often has a mood of abstraction and is concerned with penetrating into the consciousness of the individual, rather than with depicting manners, portraying society or debating moral questions. By contrast the English novel is controlled rather than wild, social rather than introspective.

*The Catalyst* is a social novel in the best English tradition. It is dry, hard, spare, with an ironic distance on its materials. Told in the first person, the story is a wry piece of self-exposure; the hero is an amoral yet ambitious research chemist, restless in his job with a large corporation, restless in an unsatisfactory marriage to a dullish middle-class girl. He is a sort of Joe Lampton, submitting to the values of his society and so exposing them; for, as in *Room at the Top*, we grant a distance between the hero Smith, and author Jones. The characters and their relationships are depicted with deft, light strokes, and there is an oddly Kafka-esque quality about the description of the Company, which becomes a strange, self-supporting world, promoting its staff illogically, electing or not electing them to the Club, moving them from plant to plant for purposes never known. Looking for a satisfactory catalyst for the working of one of his plants, the hero finds the obvious answer the right one; in his own rather arid life, too, the simplest catalyst is his answer; after some abortive extra-marital reconnaissance, he finds that he can in the end generate one emotion out of his marriage. "As I walked from the hospital . . . I felt a new emotion: faint but unmistakable. It was paternal pride."

The novel of manners and morals does certainly exist in America, but the three American offerings show up the

romance vein clearly. *The Long Night* is a finely-told *novella* about a search. Steely Brown, a negro boy in Harlem, roams to recover a stolen twenty-seven dollars. The child-view gives distance; he becomes "a sensitive, yet ruthless, observer of the gap between the word and the deed, between the ideal and the accomplished fact." The view of the child or the alien has become a standard entry into the world for American writers; here in a symbolic but also sentimental ending Steely finds . . . his lost Father.

The same theme appears in these two volumes of short stories. American society, by its very intensity and strain, keeps its sensitive members permanently on the edge of psychological destruction, unable to reconcile real and ideal; so we gather. *Blackberry Wilderness* creates, with great skill and deep psychological intensity, a world of frightening loneliness and alienation in which sensitive persons are unable to penetrate into contact with others. One of the favourite images is of isolation in a foreign city, where people become more profoundly, more terrifyingly strangers and outgoing passions are the more shut off. In the title story a half-understanding teacher says of stories by a former pupil, "she seems to be diving under the knowledge that she has"; so does Miss Berkman.

Mr. Criswell, while lacking this psychological intensity, has similar themes. His stories are more contrived, and his sharp, satirical wit can go over into sentimentality. Once again we get the child-view; in some of the stories the old exert a kind of warped psychological pressure on the innocent young, while in others the innocence has already curdled into corruption. Always a horrifying barrier lies between the generations; lies are told and in the title story a child who has been lied to too often turns frighteningly from demureness to savagery. "Jocasta," a virtuoso piece in the manner half of Angus Wilson, half of Eudora Welty, is a satirical *exposé* of a destructive old woman. Some of the others are a bit weak, though.

— MALCOLM BRADBURY

## OTHER NEW BOOKS

**History of the Second World War: The Mediterranean and Middle East, Vol. III.** Major-General I. S. O. Playfair. H.M.S.O., 50/-

This volume deals chiefly with the Desert operations from "Crusader" to the battle of Alam Halfa—the period, more or less, of General Auchinleck's command in the Middle East. The cool dispassionate narrative contrasts opportunely with John Connell's more committed account in his recent biography. Personalities are played down; it comes as quite a shock to read of General Cunningham's removal after what never seems other than competent handling of his forces. General Playfair seems to



have the Churchill-Auchinleck situation in better perspective than Mr. Connell; as an official historian he could hardly take sides. But there is a strong, though unspoken, pro-Auchinleck argument in Appendix VIII, which contrasts the performance of British and German tanks and guns of this period. We were so consistently outwepioned that it is most creditable that Auchinleck, or Cunningham or any other commander before the arrival of the Sherman tanks, managed as well as they did.

As always in this excellent series, the maps are numerous and as clear and informative as the text. B. A. Y.

**Provincial Pleasures.** Norman Nicholson. Robert Hale, 21/-

Mr. Nicholson writes of a year in a northern industrial town, and being a poet can deal with slag-heaps without squalor, and snow without a Christmas card overlay of the picturesque. He has a strong feeling for towns not so large as to have lost a natural place in the landscape, and would have us replace the conventional sneer at their provincialism with admiration for the faith that sees the stick-in-the-mud's environment as worth-while stuff anyway. The background of these essays is the sort of place where playing football is still more important than going to watch the giants at the game and where musical competition festivals flourish—the latter admirable institutions which, even if they do "encourage the display of mere parlour tricks," nevertheless provide the climate that produced Kathleen Ferrier. Imagination and an acute historical sense enliven such diverse topics as the moral obligations involved in running a provincial shop, and the five hundred million year tide beneath which "town and its people lie like grains of sand." — J. D.

## CREDIT BALANCE

**Galactic Cluster.** James Blish. Faber, 15/- SF short stories: more of the good philosophical Blish of *A Case of Conscience* than the silly Blish of the spindizzies (one story involves a reincarnation of Richard Strauss.) Some careless inconsistencies, e.g., the clock's tick in the first story.



## AT THE PLAY

*A Moon for the Misbegotten* (ARTS)  
*Look Who's Here!* (FORTUNE).

WHEN the curtain goes up on the back porch of a New England shack and our author is Eugene O'Neill we know what we are in for, even if the play starts in roaring spirits. Sooner or later a tortured soul is going to be laboriously dredged, and that is what happens in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, in spite of its robust beginning. The first act is peasant comedy. A drunken Irish farmer and his shrewish daughter bicker and fight and scheme to get the better of everyone else; he is a tyrant whose sons have all run away, while she is said to be the mistress of half the men in the neighbourhood. She has made an evening date on the porch with the owner of the farm, a boozy waster from New York, and we appear to be all set for a further scene of comedy.

But here the mood changes radically. The virago turns out a frustrated virgin, and the landlord one of the middle-aged mother's-boys beloved of American psychologists. Transformed by tenderness she listens patiently while, his head mainly in her lap, he pours out, in the intervals of D.T.s, his long-winded confession. How his mother had ringed him round with kindness, and he had saddened her by drinking, even by appearing drunk at her deathbed; and how, with her coffin in the baggage-car, he had fouled her memory on the way to the funeral by luring a blonde into his sleeper. Since then his life had been a

chain of anodyne tarts and whisky alternating with hysterical remorse. Although he quotes the poets freely it is easy to see he is a bear of very little brain. All he wants from the poor yearning farmer's daughter, who by this time loves him, is vicarious forgiveness; like the novelist in *Strange Interlude* he sees his mother in anyone in a skirt. The girl is big enough to give it to him, and for the moment he is at peace; but seeing that emotionally she has a dead fish on her hands she very wisely sends him away, and returns, broken-hearted, to her old life of storm and riot with papa.

Some of this is insufferably maudlin, and we can look in vain for any of the quality of *Long Day's Journey into Night*

## REP SELECTION

Leatherhead Theatre, *Uncle Vanya*, until January 30th.

Guildford Rep, *One More River*, until January 30th.

Northampton Rep, *Caught Napping*, until January 30th.

Queen's, Hornchurch, *Safer in Bed*, until January 30th.

or *The Iceman Cometh*. The second act needs savage pruning. At the same time, as often with inferior O'Neill, just as he seems perilously close to burlesque he pulls something out of the hat to remind us what an understanding writer he can be. Absurd as much of it is in retrospect, there are parts of Tyrone's confession which grip one and there is a sort of pathos in Josie's blighted passion.

The weakness in the Arts production (as it is likely to be in any) is that she is supposed to be a great heifer of a girl with an ugly face, whereas Margaret Whiting is middle-sized and attractive. She dissembles this fairly successfully while she is doing her Katharina act, but when she has washed and changed her dress for the tryst the point that this is probably Josie's only chance of love is lost. Otherwise I thought Miss Whiting did very well, and indeed all the cast emerged with honour from a singularly difficult play. Michael Aldridge made Tyrone surprisingly effective and Laidlaw Dalling gave the old farmer a sturdy perversity.

There are a lot of good ideas in *Look Who's Here!*, an intimate revue that brings an unparochial wit and some welcome new talent from Leatherhead Theatre. I thought the neatest was the umpire in a duel, who counts the contestants off with great solemnity, and is still counting when we get a flash of him much later in the programme. A number of items are agreeably and successfully mad: the well-dressed, deadpan man coming into the scent department of a store and adding to his order the girl behind the counter (in gift wrapping please), the three nonsense songs sung to tulips by Anna Quayle, and the splendid rag of a horror film. The marital reverie of an ambassador dressing to receive his knighthood and the funeral dirge of four cheated legatees are others which ring the bell. The range is wide, the comment intelligent, and although of course there are the usual damp squibs the general level is considerably higher than the average. Nearly half the programme is by Ted Hicks, and the producer is Charles Ross, who has made things move fast.

But I think almost more important than the programme is the exceptional spirit of the cast, who are so vividly on their toes that their gaiety becomes infectious; no stars and an equal share of the jam is always an encouraging formula. Barbara Young, who seems to me a find, Anna Quayle, with a very wild look in her eye, Sonia Graham and Nyree Dawn Porter are the girls, and Donald Hewlett, Dennis Wood and Tony Tanner the men.

## Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

*Rosmersholm* (Comedy—25/11/59), don't miss Peggy Ashcroft in this fine production. *A Clean Kill* (Criterion—23/12/59), good new crime play. *Make Me An Offer* (New—23/12/59), engaging cockney musical. —ERIC KEOWN

## EXHIBITIONS

"Punch in the Cinema," Odeon, Sutton Coldfield.

"Punch with Wings," Exhibition Hall, Queen's Buildings, London Airport Central.



Phil Hogan—COLIN BLAKELY

Josie Hogan—MARGARET WHITING

[A Moon for the Misbegotten]

## AT THE PICTURES

*Pillow Talk—Happy Anniversary  
The Shakedown*

I FOUND *Pillow Talk* (Director: Michael Gordon) a thoroughly enjoyable comedy, with many more genuinely deep, easy, pleasurable laughs than the sort of thing that's usually supposed to provide them. I believe if more people had the detachment to be conscious of and to study their own reactions a great majority of them would realize that the sort of laugh they get from the average comedy built by gag-men round the personality of some well-known funny man is (compared with those here) quite mechanical, a superficial ha-ha-ha in unison with the rest of the audience, with nothing relaxed and involuntary about it. Here the laughs are beautifully managed, timed as they can be timed only in a film, superbly effective and satisfying.

A good many of them depend on that invariably successful formula, the prophecy—or implied prophecy—fulfilled. In one scene some character has been given to understand that a particular thing will happen; in a later scene it does, or seems to be going to, and somehow the result is always funny. Or rather, to watch the character's realization and recollection of the prophecy makes one laugh. Don't ask me why; it simply is so. This kind of effect is used quite admirably, time and again, and the charming Doris Day puts it over to perfection.

The story is no more than a piece of nonsense contrived to make such opportunities for laughter (and, at intervals, song—this is not a musical, but several songs are tied in to the narrative in a quite credible way). Rock Hudson is a gay philanderer, Miss Day is the girl who shares the same telephone on a party line and is exasperated whenever she tries to use it by hearing him in disingenuous love-talk—or -song—with someone else. That is the start of the action, but it is most skilfully complicated with amusing incident and detail and involves several other amusing people, notably Tony Randall as a millionaire, i.e., a member of a minority group ("You outnumber us, but you'll never get us") and Thelma Ritter as a daily help who always arrives with a hangover. There are so many good points that could be mentioned, but above everything else is the quality I spoke of to begin with: here is a feast of that particular kind of solid gold laughter.

*Happy Anniversary* (Director: David Miller) is basically the same kind of comedy—with only one song—but it disappointed me. Having read a good deal about it beforehand, and knowing it had run into a certain amount of disapproval on moral grounds in the U.S., I was expecting the same sort of civilized fun as in—for instance—*The Moon is Blue*; on paper, the story suggests something that might shock the pious in the



Alice Walters—MITZI GAYNOR

Chris Walters—DAVID NIVEN

same way. In the film there are, to be sure, several excellently-done scenes. But somehow . . . the tone of the thing as a whole seems raucous, hoked-up, over-emphasized, designed to wring the last squeal from the back row of the gallery (it is adapted from a play, and remains essentially theatrical—even to the good old stage "living-room," with the stairs curving up). David Niven and Mitzi Gaynor are quite pleasing as the couple who incautiously reveal that their thirteenth wedding anniversary is really, except in name, their fourteenth, and there are two brilliant children; but the general impression is that nearly everything is put over *fortissimo*—with a nudge.

In outline, *The Shakedown* (Director: John Lemont) looks like the most commercial crime story, the sort of thing made for the dimwit "X" public (by which I mean the people who will queue for hours to see a picture, good or bad, merely because they've heard it's about prostitutes). It concerns a Soho vice king (Terence Morgan) and his ingenious way of blackmailing his girls' clients by photographing them through a two-way mirror. But one or two signs—such as a detective's stern remark, near the beginning, that the man is just as guilty as the girl—indicate that it has a moral aim; and much of it is very well done. There are excellent small-part players (Harry H. Corbett, Donald Pleasence, Bill Owen) and excellently-written small parts. Many of the tiniest momentary "bits" are written and played and directed into real characters—for instance the estate agent (Timothy Bateson). There are also one

or two admirably-handled action and suspense sequences. Script by Leigh Vance and the director; I should like to see what they, and the other good people concerned, might do with a more worthwhile theme.

## Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

*The Jayhawkers* is a big spectacular Western with Jeff Chandler as a would-be dictator in Kansas in 1859. Others of interest in London: the unique, indefinably moving *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (20/1/60); the entertaining *Our Man in Havana* (13/1/60); *On the Beach* (30/12/59), for another day or so; Disney's *White Wilderness* ("Survey," 6/1/60); and *Ben-Hur* (30/12/59).

Best of the releases I think is the gay little British comedy *Desert Mice* ("Survey," 23/12/59). *Beloved Infidel* (6/1/60) is efficient emotional stuff based on Sheila Graham's book about her life with Scott Fitzgerald.

— RICHARD MALLETT

## AT THE OPERA

*Oedipus Rex* (SADLER'S WELLS)

BEING a duty-bound deadhead makes a great difference. If I had had to pay for my seat I don't suppose I would have gone near this first night. I remember listening as a young Stravinskyan thirty years ago to early broadcasts and concert performances of *Oedipus* with my heart gradually sinking into my boots. The score seemed a perverse and chilly junk-shop. Poking



about one came across bits of Handel, Donizetti, Moussorgsky and even, incongruously enough, Stravinsky. A stage production by a German company at Edinburgh Festival a few years ago on the whole confirmed my dim view. I wrote *Œdipus* off.

The Sadler's Wells production and performance not only proved me wrong; they showed further that in compressing Sophocles, turning him into Latin and having him sung by monumental (and largely static) masked figures, Stravinsky and Cocteau his librettist knew what they were about. Relying entirely on its repertory resources, Sadler's Wells gets better singing of the score, alike from the chorus and from the soloists (Ronald Dowd as *Œdipus* and Monica Sinclair as Jocasta give shining and shattering performances), than I ever heard in any concert version.

Colin Davis is the conductor. I would back his *Œdipus* as I would back Dowd's singing of the name-part, against anybody's in Europe. The great virtue of the designs (by Abd'elkadar Farrah) and the production (by Michel St. Denis) is that they make an immense and harrowing crescendo of the King's downfall. At the end *Œdipus*, with the stain (though not the guilt) of incest and parricide upon him, comes groping down from the palace heights, mask smeared with blood from his self-mutilated eyes, to sweeping choral-orchestral strains that rake heaven and hell. The Donizettian bits, as I once considered them, play their part as much as the rest in building up this immensity.

For the first time in my life I have known an opera explained by production and performance quality. As every provincial operagoer knows, standard

Verdi and Puccini survive inconceivable prunings, slackness and small-mindedness. Short of Pinkerton with a wooden leg, *Madame Butterfly* would still make people weep if done against curtains, to the accompaniment of a clarinet and a cottage piano. *Œdipus Rex* is radically different stuff. It demands absolutely valid vocal and other material as well as some greatness of mind in the people who put it on. At Sadler's Wells these demands have been met.

— CHARLES REID

## ON THE AIR

### Heard But Not Seen

A COMPETENT tracker could follow my sister-in-law round England by the furniture she leaves behind her—here a tallboy, there five odd chairs, and in our house a television set. As this might disappear as suddenly as it came, our viewing experience has been brief but very intense; we have been submerged in that twelve-inch world for seven weeks, and we are only now coming up for thought.

My first thought was to wonder what I had missed. In particular, what does my old love, the patient radio in the corner, provide that television either does not attempt or attempts inadequately? The largest and most obvious item is serious music. I am told that in the almost mythical days when Neanderthal viewers peered at blue, four-inch screens through opera glasses, there used to be quite a lot of music on television. As Beethoven bumped and thundered his way towards some terrific coda the camera would zoom through the orchestra, rest for a moment on the

conductor's cuff-links, and then flit off to examine the trombonist's fingering of an important passage.

We have finished with all that. Nowadays the music on TV seems to be chosen exclusively for its ability to satisfy the camera. "Music for You" is an instance; a chatty introduction from the conductor, justifying, if possible, the orchestra having the next four and a half minutes all to themselves while they scurry through some overture; then a snatch of ballet—can't go wrong with that; then a brace of Verdi arias, half-staged so to speak, with a horse on the scene if there's a reference to one in the words.

To be fair, this is an area where there is little point in TV trying to compete. Music is an aural delight, and the eyes need only enough to keep them happy—the shimmer on the brass and the conductor's collar working away from his shirt. Most music-lovers don't even need that, and the varied excellence of the radio programmes (better-balanced now than they were a couple of years ago) satisfies all their needs.

But there are other areas where TV ought to compete but doesn't. Most of these come under the vague classification of "things that stretch the mind." TV is full of things that stretch the emotions, leaving the viewer gasping with their impact, but I do not remember seeing anything which made one think hard in order to keep up. Radio, on the other hand, is full of mind-stretchers, and not only on the Third Programme. Last month's Reith lectures, for instance, wherein Professor Medawar discussed the techniques by which it might be possible to forecast the future of Man, kept the listener constantly alert; miss one paragraph and the rest might well be meaningless.

It may be that TV does provide programmes of this nature but broadcasts them at a time when I and the rest of the mass audience have gone to bed, leaving the night-loving intelligentsia to wrestle with higher things, but I don't think so. I think there is a real deficiency here, allied to a deficiency of style which I have noticed. It is not that language on the radio is livelier but that language on TV is dead. The TV commentator, if he is feeling idle, can always get away with saying "Now, as you can see, there's a blob-shaped sort of mass in the middle distance, which is in fact the vehicle from Venus." The radio reporter would have to come up with a much more stimulating picture. Even the day-long reaches of Test-Match commentary on the radio are far more likely to throw up an occasional vivid image of a bowler's action or a batsman's style than anything one hears on TV.

One could multiply instances. It's the sort of thing one does to comfort oneself when one's TV set is likely to disappear any moment.

— PETER DICKINSON



# The Porcelain Thing

By PATRICK RYAN

**M**Y mind was greatly relieved when I read that paragraph in the review of the Duke of Bedford's book:

"... Grandfather Herbrand was the Eleventh Duke of Bedford... Old Herbrand could not stand the sight of workmen. While electricians were installing electric lights they had to stop work and pop into cupboards to hide from the Duke whenever he happened to pass..."

Since the age of sixteen I've been wondering who it was we were working for that week. Four of us there were in the gang—Big Casey, the plumber, Albert and Griffio, the labourers, and myself, the apprentice. We were sent to put indoor sanitation into the third floor, west wing annexe, of this great Gothic barracks.

The butler lined us up in the corridor on the site. "Now, my men," he said, "there's one thing you must plainly understand. His Grace cannot stand the sight of workmen. At his approach you are to stop work and hide in a cupboard until he has passed. His Grace carries a sword-stick and you will hear it tapping on the parquet floor before he comes into sight around either corner. This is the only cupboard on this corridor and will therefore be your place of concealment." He pointed to a door about ten yards away. Then he looked with distaste at the top quality, white-glaze model we had come to install. "And for God's sake, don't let his Grace see that... that porcelain thing exposed to public view."

Big Casey addressed us when the butler had gone. "This is a fine contract we might be getting on to and 'tis not for us to question the foibles of the nobility. So the minute anybody hears that stick a-tapping I want to see you all going like ferrets for that cupboard. Albert and Griffio, you take the tools, and you, my lad, being the junior, will carry that." He pointed to the porcelain fitting.

The tiny room we were converting was already full of pipes and basins. We had to strip it and take the floor up, so nothing could be hidden in there.

We'd barely been going an hour when Griffio, who was on listening watch, gave the alarm.

"It's the Old One. I can hear him rattling round the corner."

Big Casey led us to the hiding-place and dashed inside. It was an airing-cupboard and the space left free of linen was only about half a telephone kiosk, little more than a large cabin trunk. Casey bashed his nose on the shelving, Griffio collided with Casey's seventeen stone, cannoned off and cracked Albert with the big pipe-wrench. It was house-full and everybody swearing when I arrived but I managed to burrow myself and my burden inside. It was a proper ducal model, big as a temple bell and heavy, and I clasped it round the waist like a lover.

"All breathe out," commanded Casey, and heaved the door shut.

"I'm suffocating," gasped Albert.

"It's that damned boy," moaned Griffio. "He's shoving the pipe-end straight in my stomach."

To me it seemed like Purgatory... dark, clean, cramped, and a smell of souls scorching.

The tapping came up to the cupboard and went safely on past and out of hearing.

We struggled out and Casey mopped his brow.

"Saints! Another do in that Black Hole of Calcutta and we'll not be fit to take on any contract, boys. We'll have to work this out scientific in case the Old One comes round again."

"It's the boy," said Albert. "Holding that thing out in front of him, he takes the space of two men."

We experimented with different packing arrangements—it was like playing Sardines in a hot-house—and Casey worked out an alarm drill.

"You're the key-man in this, my lad," he said. "To conserve space, you've got to hold that thing above your head."



"... so Mummy said why didn't I go to Stratford-on-Avon with Susan that's my sister not the one that was in the convent in Brussels but the other one and we could see Charles Laughton in King Lear because she knows I'm absolutely crazy about Charles Laughton ever since I saw that re-issue of Mutiny on the Bounty but of course King Lear isn't actually my favourite play I always think it's a bit depressing don't you so then Mummy said..."

We made a few dummy runs and got the movement off pat. With all this rehearsal we didn't get much plumbing done, and were just making an exploratory cut in one of the pipes when His Grace came tapping round on a second lap.

"Back to the sweat-box, boys!" cried Casey.

Except that I jabbed Albert a nasty one under the chin with the prow of my pottery, and Griffio came over dizzy from oxygen deficiency, all went smoothly, and the stick went tapping on by.

Bursting once more into the light of day, we got down to the job again and had just cut clean through the pipe, proving it contained water under pressure, when His Grace came round for the third time.

"He's persecuting us," said Casey, ramming a wooden plug in the pipe. "Scramble, boys!"

We went like rabbits into our bolt-hole but I could feel the pace beginning to tell. Dashing up and down that corridor carrying a top-quality porcelain thing above his head would have creased Zatopek.

Twice more the Old One came tap-tapping along the corridors, and twice more we plugged up pipes and beat it into the airing cupboard. By the last time I was in very poor shape. The other three got out of the traps well ahead of me and they were inside while I was still struggling up the straight. It was all my weary arms could do to keep

the mighty conch above my head. As I tottered home, Griffio, thinking I was already inside, slammed the door in my face . . . I ran full tilt into the woodwork . . . the impact sent me staggering back . . . the thing slipped out of my weakening grasp, fell like a great candle-snuffer down over my head and came to rest on my shoulders.

The tapping was coming up to the corner . . . I tried to lift my monstrous helmet but I couldn't get any leverage from below . . . I banged on the door . . .

"Open up, Mr. Casey!" I cried, my voice echoing inside the marble dome.

"Saints!" Albert answered. "The door's stuck."

The tapping was almost upon me . . . I couldn't get into hiding and judged that the best thing to do was to make myself as inconspicuous as possible. If I froze into my background, like the stick-insect, he might never notice me.

So I stood rigidly to attention against the door, stock-still and concealed to chest-level in a porcelain thing. It was like living inside a white-enamelled euphonium. The tapping stopped in front of me and there was silence for a full minute.

"God in heaven!" an old man said. "Dear God in heaven!"

He tapped on my casque with his sword-stick.

"Anybody in there?" he asked.

"Yes, your Grace. Me." I spoke in a very refined tone so that he would not

realize I was a workman. God knows what it sounded like by the time the words got round the U-bend.

"What the hell are you doing in there?"

"Nothing, your Grace."

"Nothing! Standing there like a blasted pantomime. Come out and let's get a look at you."

"I can't get it off, your Grace."

There was an explosion as a plug blew out of a pipe and a fountain of water fizzed into the corridor. The door of the cupboard flew open and Big Casey, Albert and Griffio cascaded over the floor.

"Workmen!" yelled the old man. "Workmen! Throw them out! I can't stand the sight of workmen. Chetwynd! Chetwynd! Call the police! Throw them out! . . ."

And he went tapping off down the corridor at the double. Casey tried to get the thing off my head but only succeeded in locking it round my shoulder-blades. The butler insisted that we should go before His Grace came round again, and they led me like Bottom out of the house. I slipped on the steps and freed myself by cracking my helmet into three pieces on a stone heraldic beast.

I don't know whether the Old One let them call in another plumber to finish the job we started. I hope he did for the sake of the guests in the west wing annexe. It must be nigh on a fivepenny bus ride to the bottom of the garden at Woburn Abbey.



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